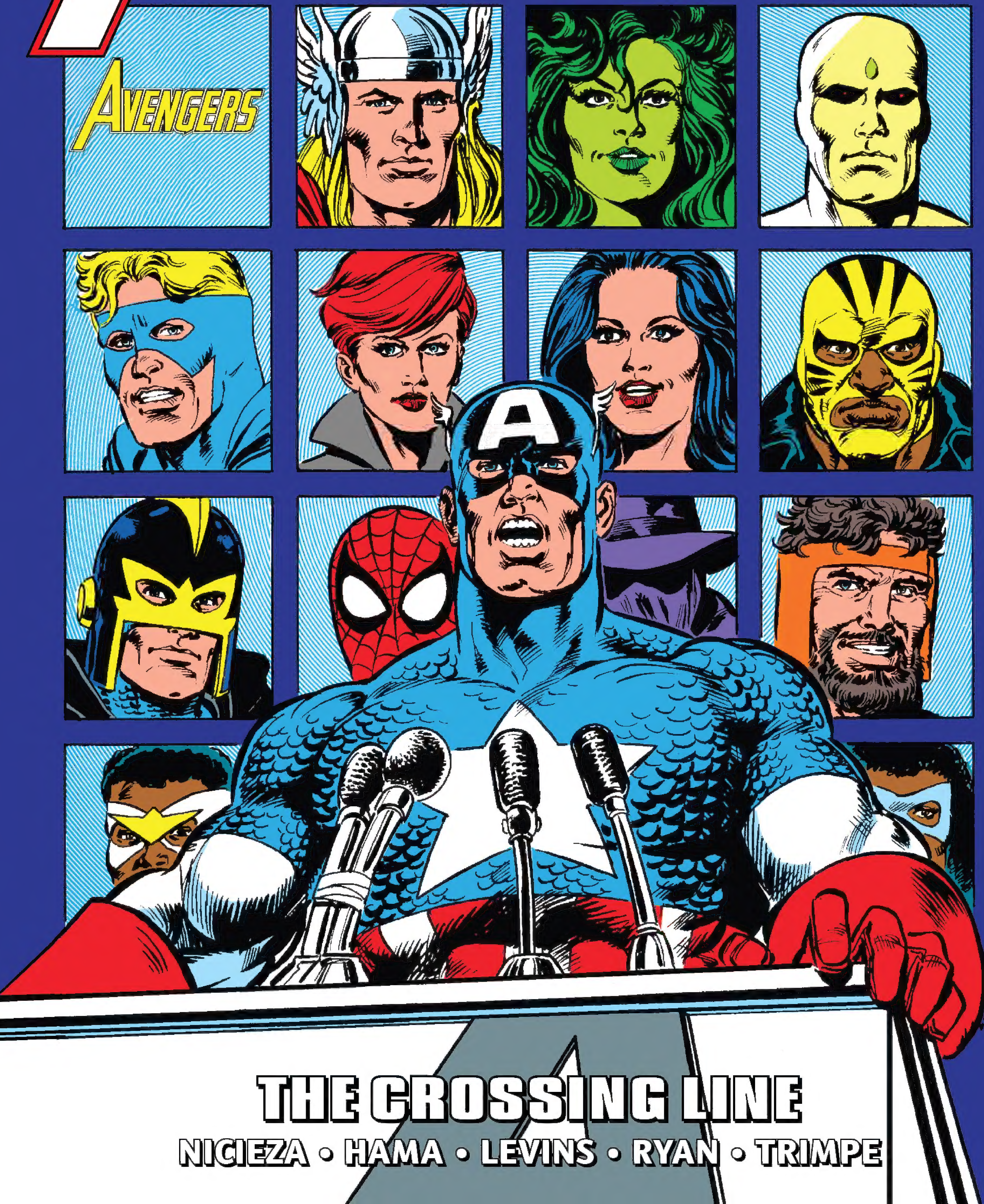
MARVEL

EPIC COLLECTION

AVENGERS



THE CROSSING LINE

NICIEZA • HAMA • LEVINS • RYAN • TRIMPE

EPIC COLLECTION

AVENGERS

THE CROSSING LINE

VOLUME 20

1990-1991

AVENGERS #319-333 & ANNUAL #19 AND MATERIAL FROM CAPTAIN AMERICA ANNUAL #9, IRON MAN ANNUAL #11, THOR ANNUAL #15 & AVENGERS WEST COAST ANNUAL #5

AVENGERS

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THE CROSSING LINE

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"THE CROSSING LINE, PART ONE:
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"RATS IN THE KITCHEN"

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"THE CROSSING LINE, PART 2:
UNDERLYING CURRENTS"
"CHANGING OF THE GUARD"

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YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT"

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IF THE TERMINI COME..."

THOR ANNUAL #15, 1990
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AVENGERS WEST COAST ANNUAL #5, 1990
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AVENGERS ANNUAL #19, 1990
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"MEDIA WATCH"
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AVENGERS #326, NOVEMBER 1990
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"THE MANY FACES OF DOOM"

AVENGERS #333, JUNE 1991
"LIFE OF THE PARTY!"

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THE CROSSING LINE
PART 1 OF SIX
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TM
$1.00 US
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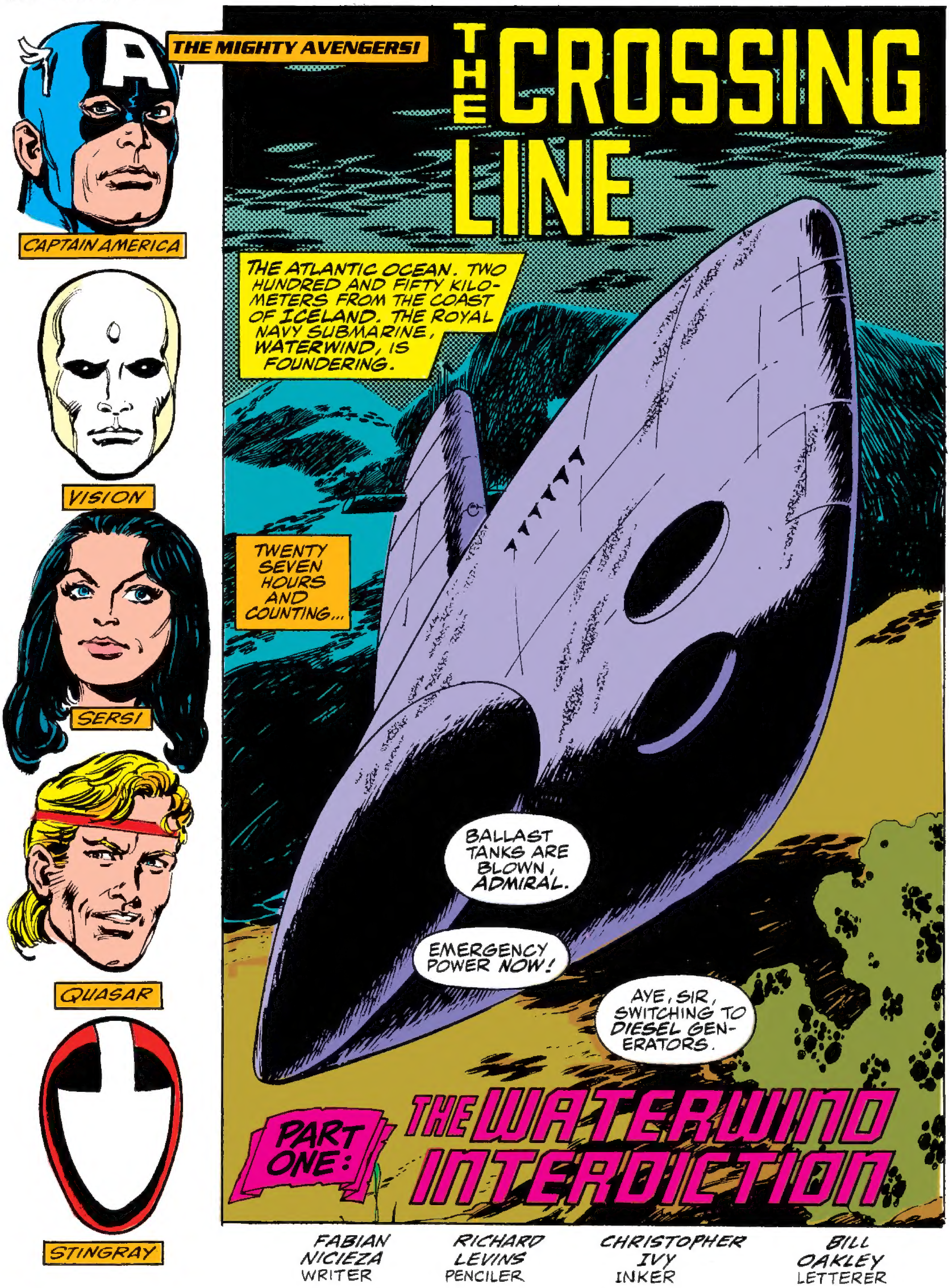
319
JULY
02458
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
RYAN PALMER
CONFRONTATION!

TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND!
STAN LEE PRESENTS . . .


THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!
CAPTAIN AMERICA
VISION
SERSI
QUASAR
STINGRAY
THE CROSSING LINE
THE ATLANTIC OCEAN. TWO HUNDRED AND FIFTY KILOMETERS FROM THE COAST OF ICELAND. THE ROYAL NAVY SUBMARINE, WATERWIND, IS FOUNDERING.
TWENTY SEVEN HOURS AND COUNTING...
BALLAST TANKS ARE BLOWN, ADMIRAL.
EMERGENCY POWER NOW!
AYE, SIR, SWITCHING TO DIESEL GENERATORS.
PART ONE: THE WATERWIND INTERDICTION

FABIAN NICIEZA
WRITER

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CHRISTOPHER IVY
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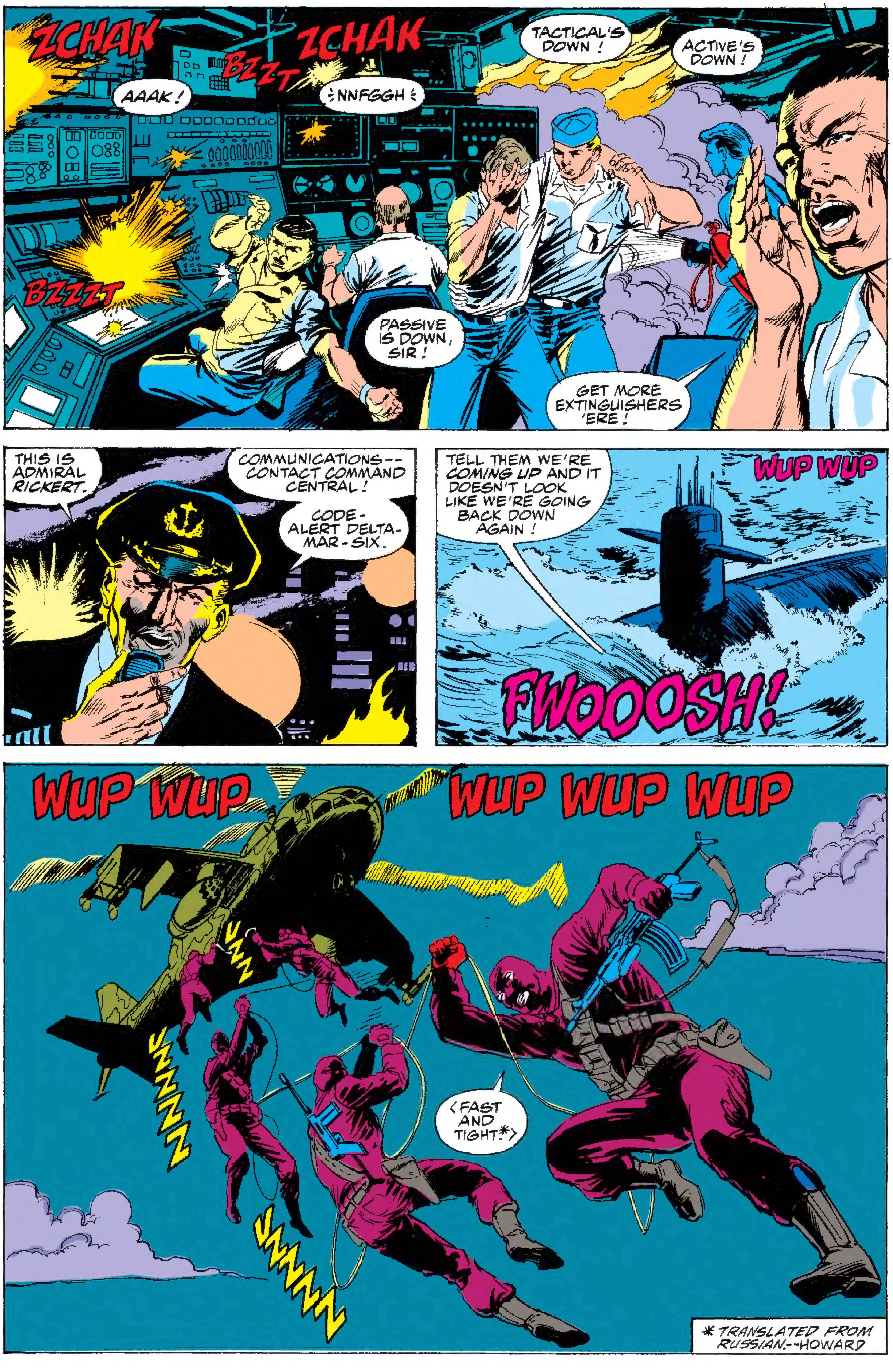
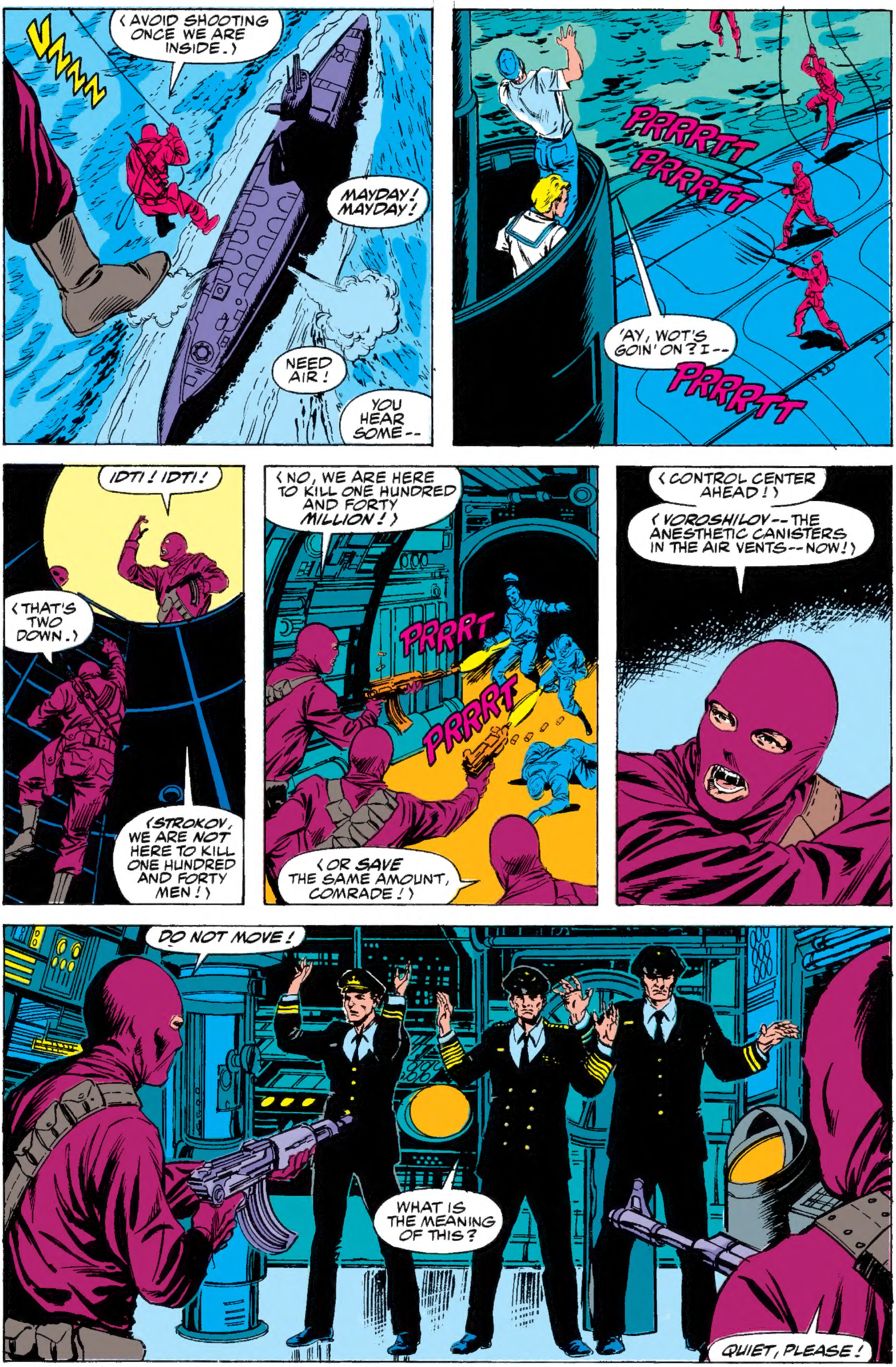
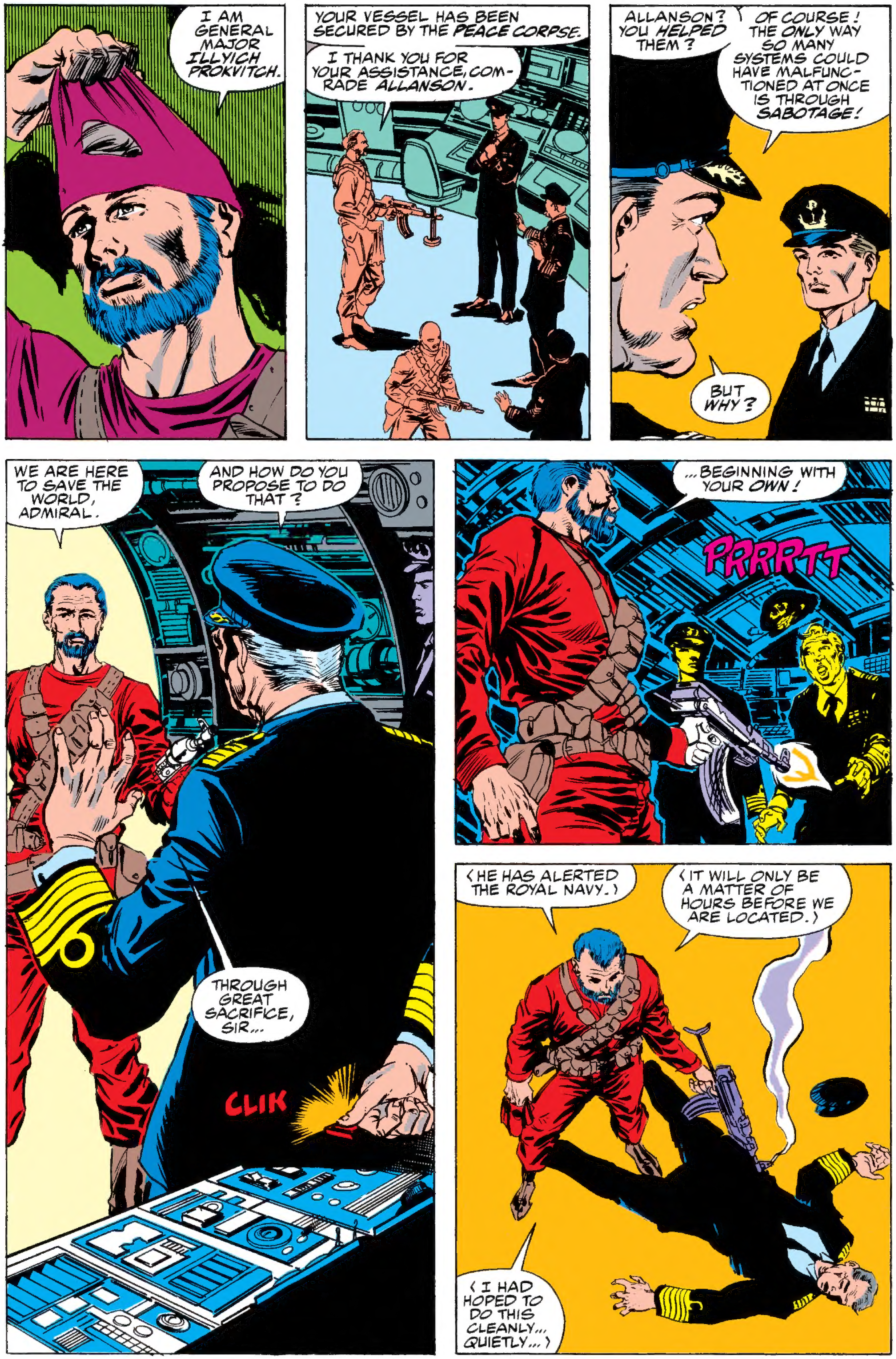
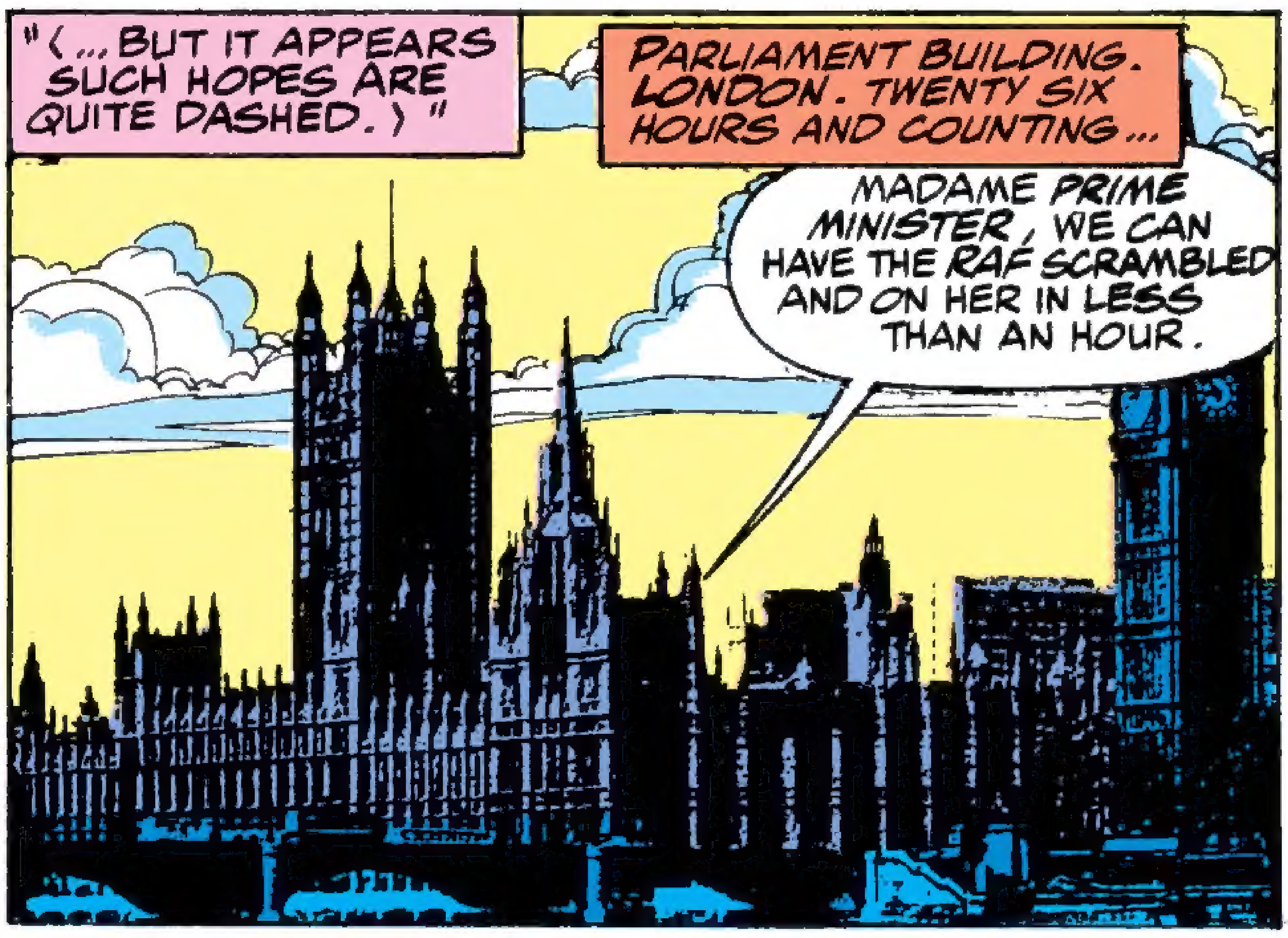
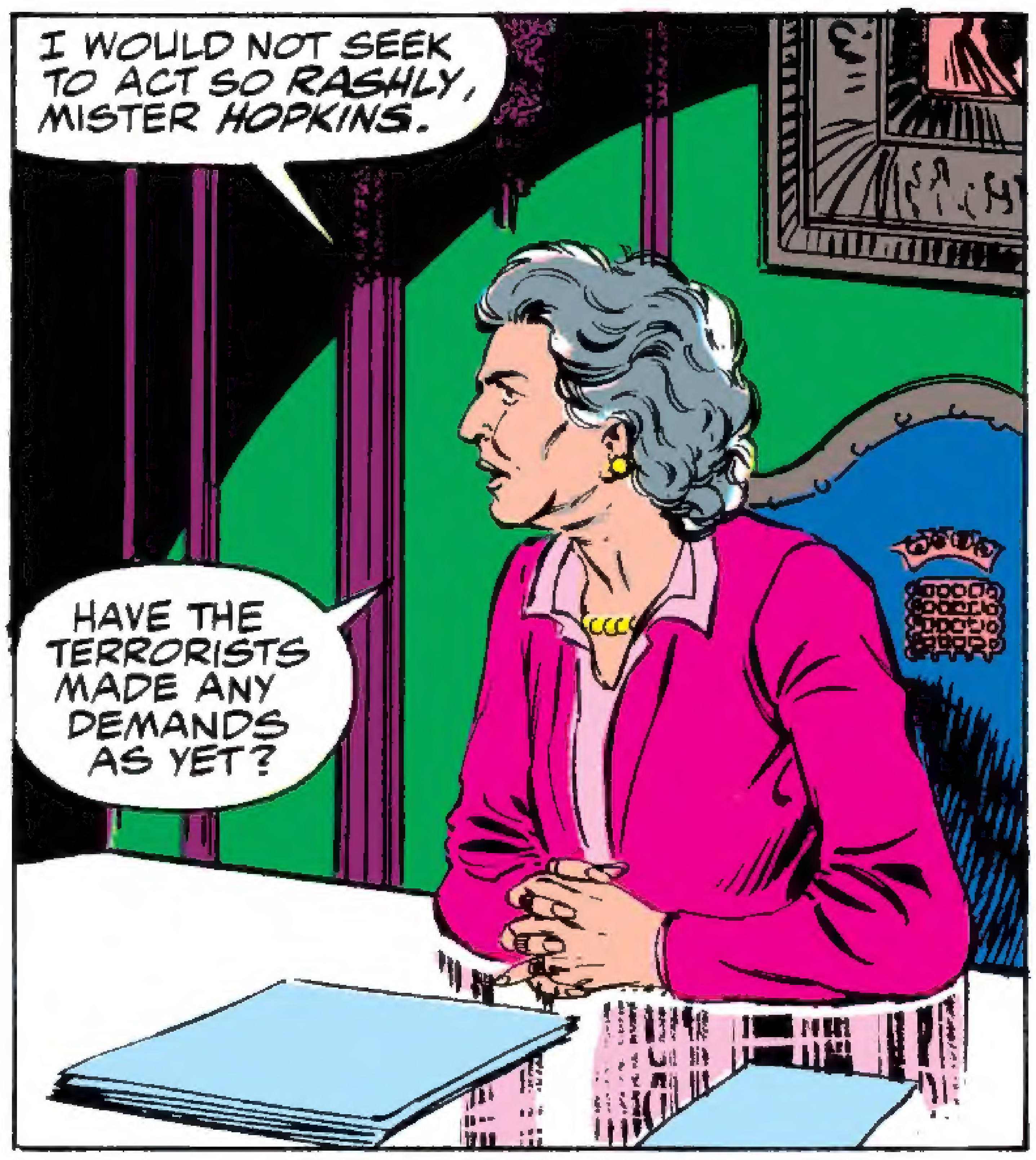
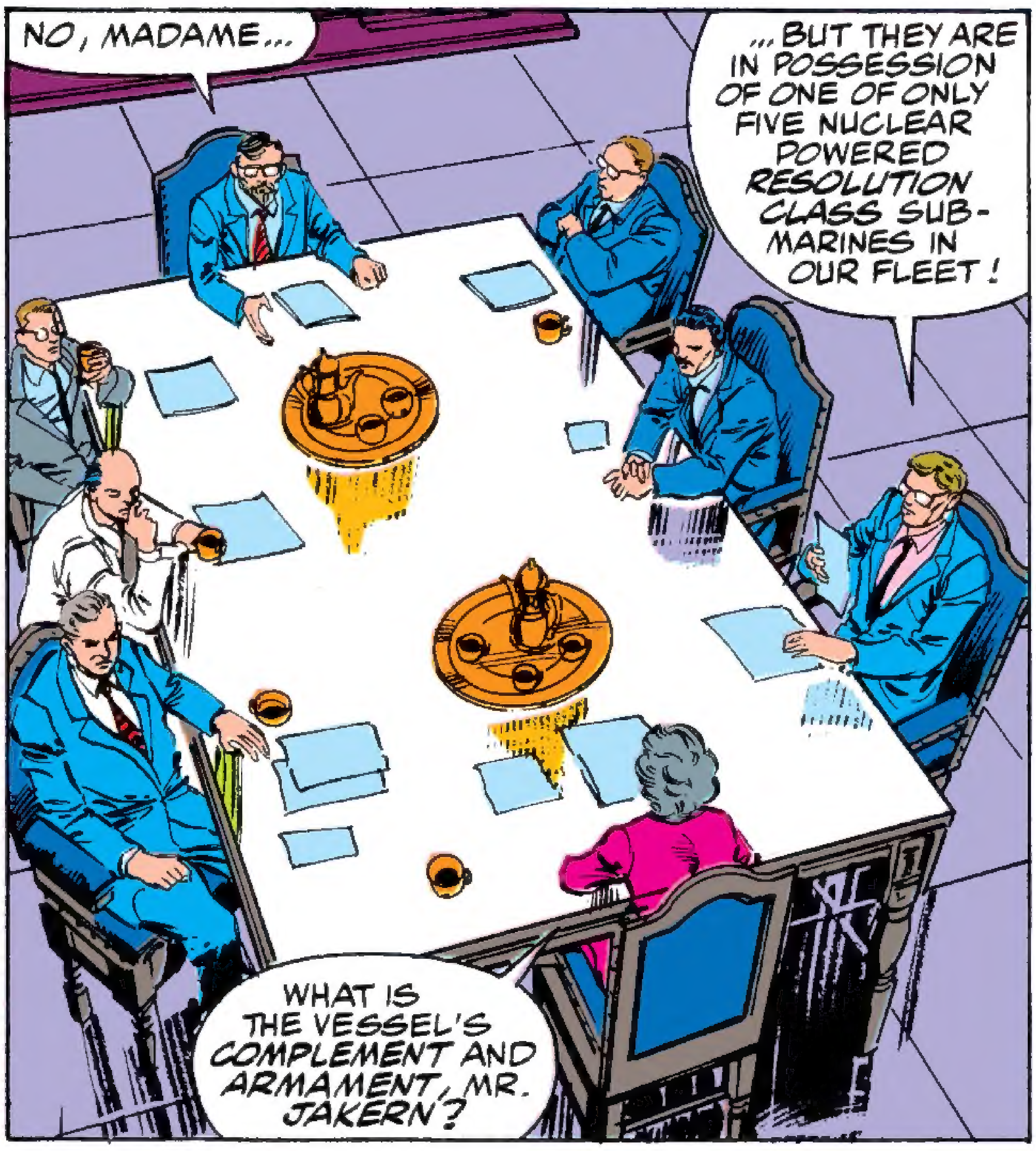

ZCHAK
BZZ-T
ZCHAK
AAAK!
NNFGGH
TACTICAL'S DOWN!
ACTIVE'S DOWN!
BZZZT
PASSIVE IS DOWN, SIR!
GET MORE EXTINGUISHERS 'ERE!
THIS IS ADMIRAL RICKERT.
COMMUNICATIONS-- CONTACT COMMAND CENTRAL!
CODE-ALERT DELTA-MAR-SIX.
TELL THEM WE'RE COMING UP AND IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE WE'RE GOING BACK DOWN AGAIN!
WUP WUP
FWOOOSH!
WUP WUP
WUP WUP WUP
ZZZZZ
ZZZZZ
ZZZZZ
‹FAST AND TIGHT.*›
* TRANSLATED FROM RUSSIAN.--HOWARD

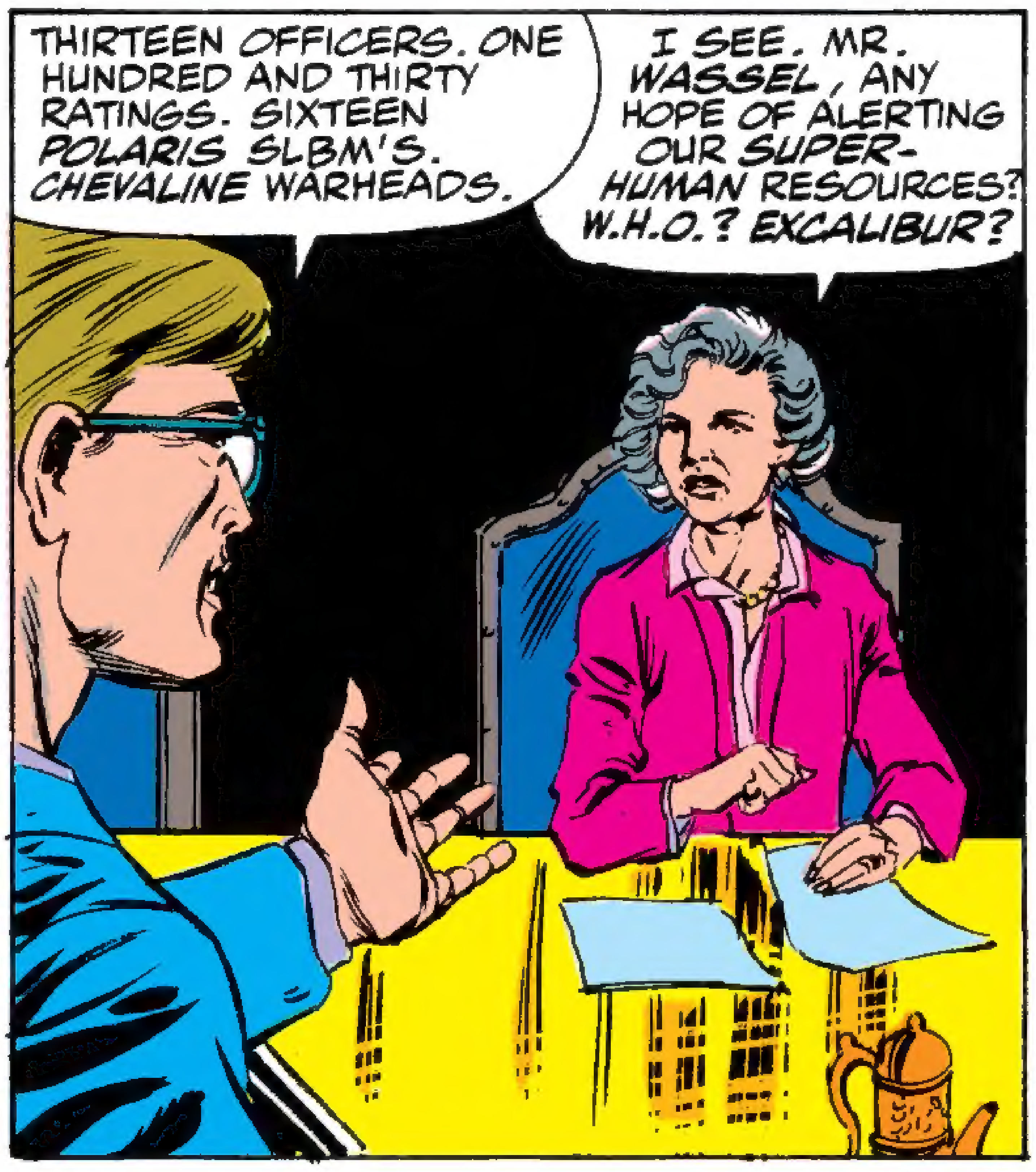

VNNN
‹AVOID SHOOTING ONCE WE ARE INSIDE.›
MAYDAY! MAYDAY!
NEED AIR!
YOU HEAR SOME--
PRRRTT
PRRRTT
'AY, WOT'S GOIN' ON? I--
PRRRTT
IDTI! IDTI!
‹THAT'S TWO DOWN.›
‹STROKOV, WE ARE NOT HERE TO KILL ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY MEN!›
‹NO, WE ARE HERE TO KILL ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY MILLION!›
PRRRT
PRRRT
‹OR SAVE THE SAME AMOUNT, COMRADE!›
‹CONTROL CENTER AHEAD!›
‹VOROSHILOV--THE ANESTHETIC CANISTERS IN THE AIR VENTS--NOW!›
DO NOT MOVE!
WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?
QUIET, PLEASE!

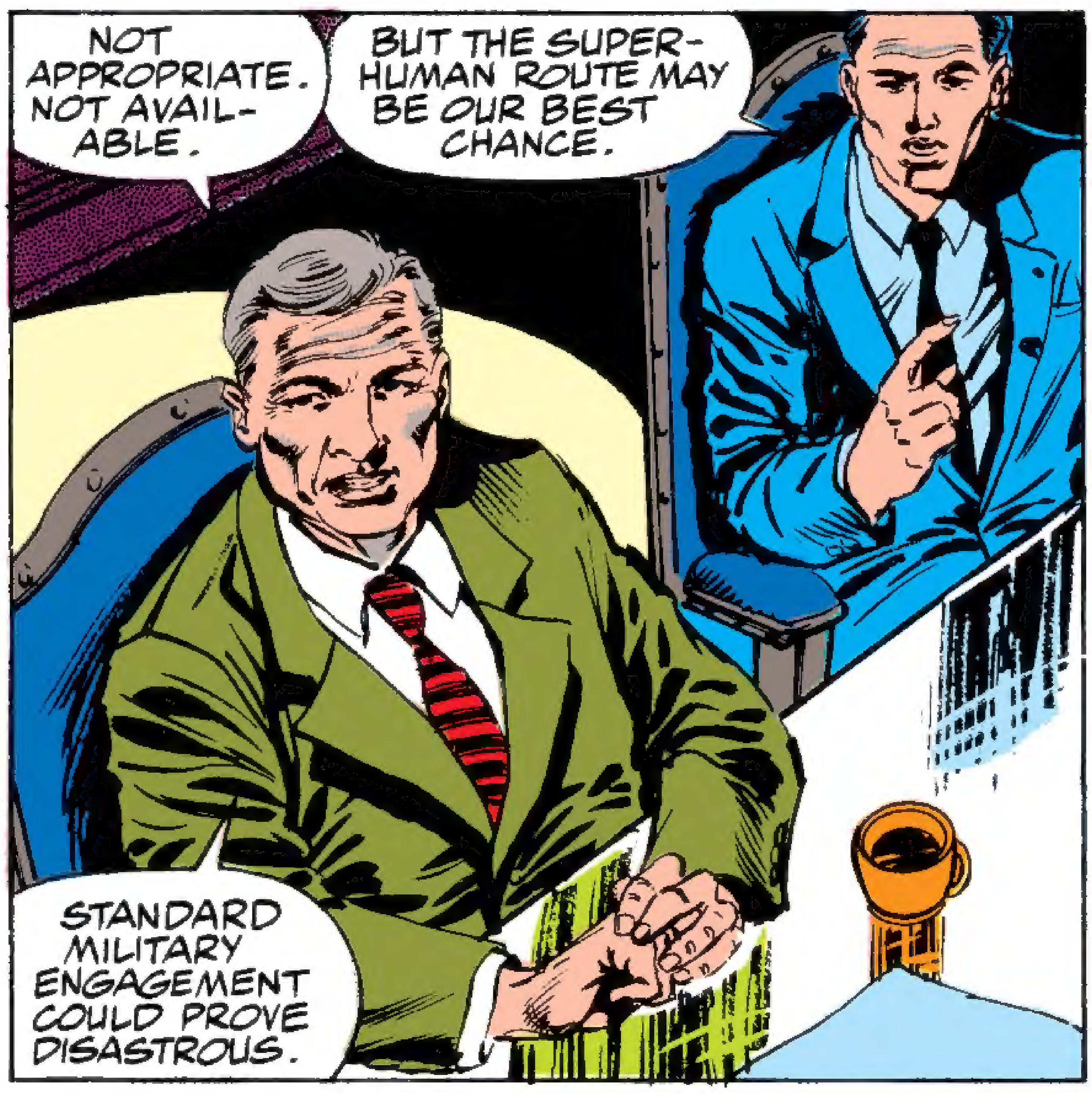

I AM GENERAL MAJOR ILLYICH PROKVITCH.
YOUR VESSEL HAS BEEN SECURED BY THE PEACE CORPSE.
I THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE, COMRADE ALLANSON.
ALLANSON? YOU HELPED THEM?
OF COURSE! THE ONLY WAY SO MANY SYSTEMS COULD HAVE MALFUNCTIONED AT ONCE IS THROUGH SABOTAGE!
BUT WHY?
WE ARE HERE TO SAVE THE WORLD, ADMIRAL.
AND HOW DO YOU PROPOSE TO DO THAT?
THROUGH GREAT SACRIFICE, SIR...
CLIK
...BEGINNING WITH YOUR OWN!
PRRRTT
‹HE HAS ALERTED THE ROYAL NAVY.›
‹IT WILL ONLY BE A MATTER OF HOURS BEFORE WE ARE LOCATED.›
‹I HAD HOPED TO DO THIS CLEANLY... QUIETLY...›

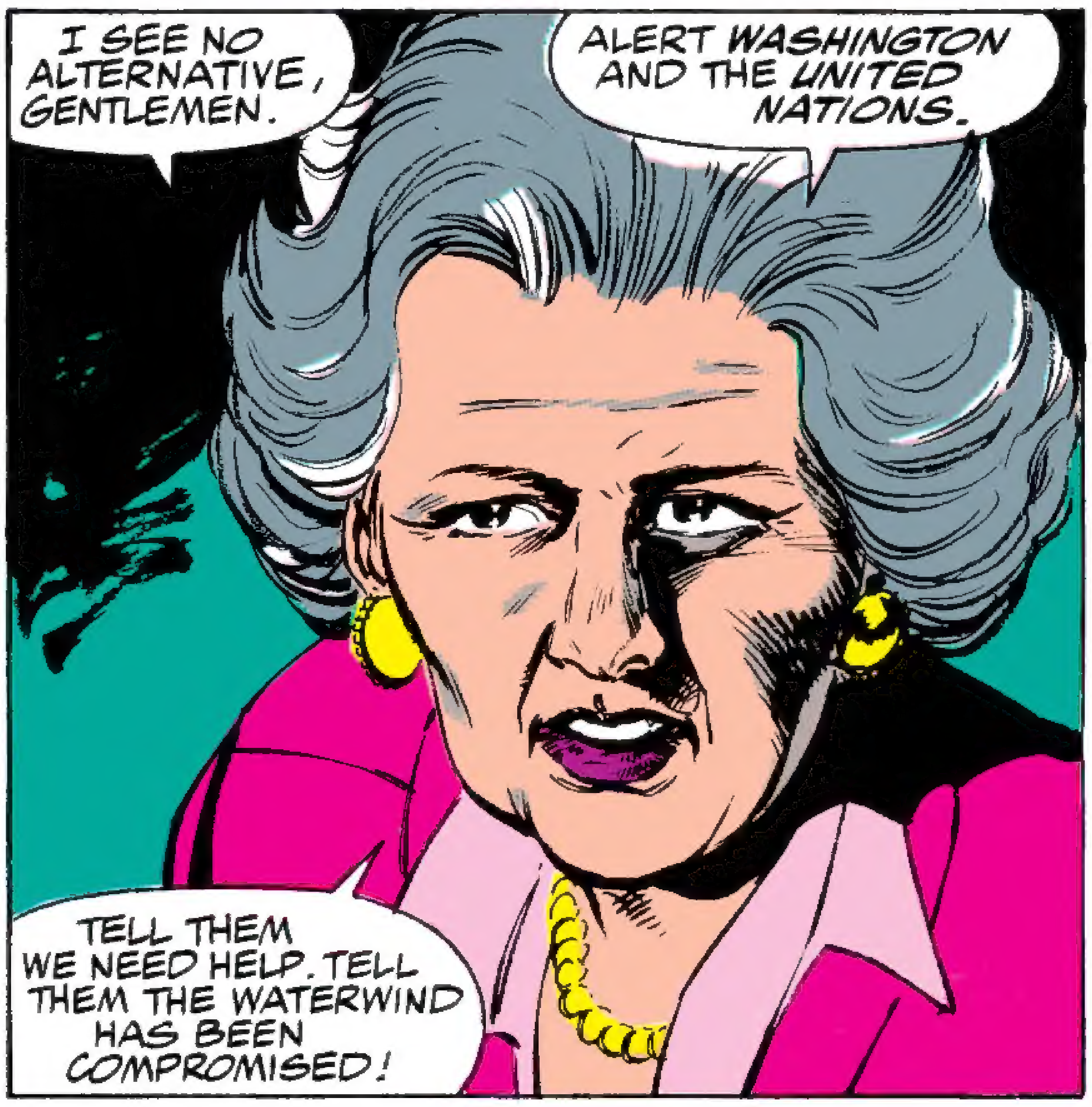

"(...BUT IT APPEARS SUCH HOPES ARE QUITE DASHED.) "
PARLIAMENT BUILDING. LONDON. TWENTY SIX HOURS AND COUNTING...
MADAME PRIME MINISTER, WE CAN HAVE THE RAF SCRAMBLED AND ON HER IN LESS THAN AN HOUR.

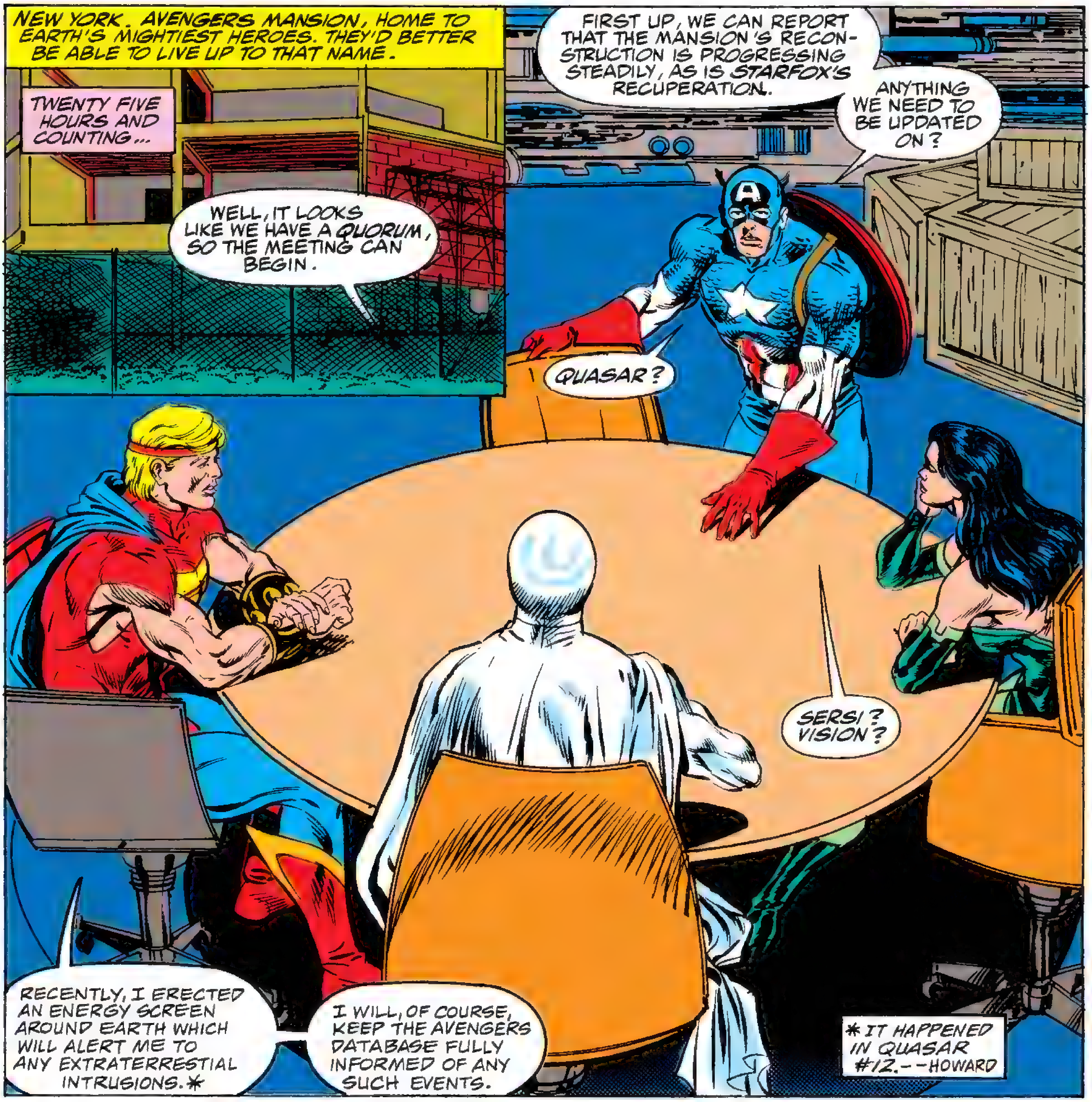

I WOULD NOT SEEK TO ACT SO RASHLY, MISTER HOPKINS.
HAVE THE TERRORISTS MADE ANY DEMANDS AS YET?

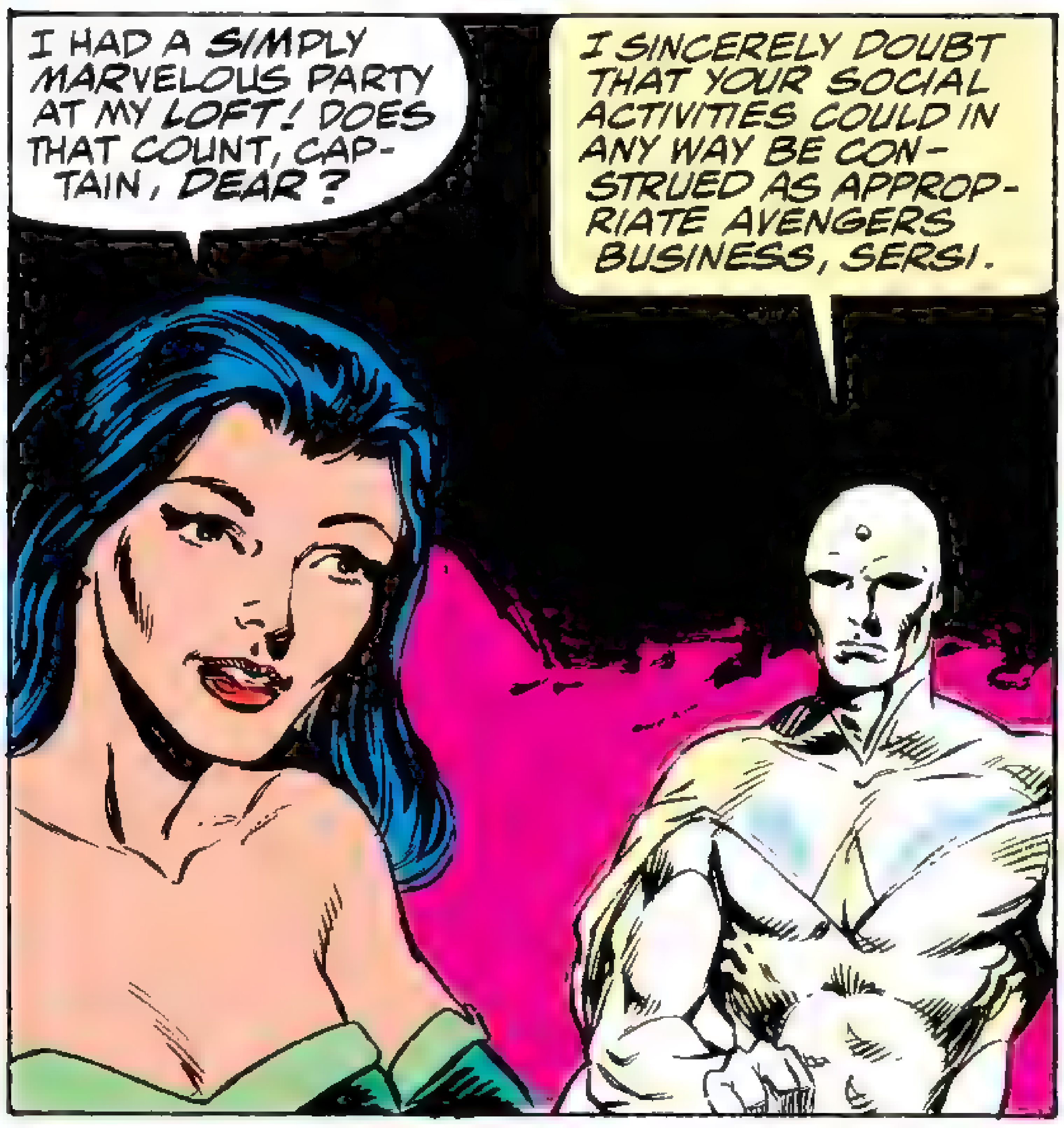

NO, MADAME...
...BUT THEY ARE IN POSSESSION OF ONE OF ONLY FIVE NUCLEAR POWERED RESOLUTION CLASS SUB-MARINES IN OUR FLEET!
WHAT IS THE VESSEL'S COMPLEMENT AND ARMAMENT, MR. JAKERN?

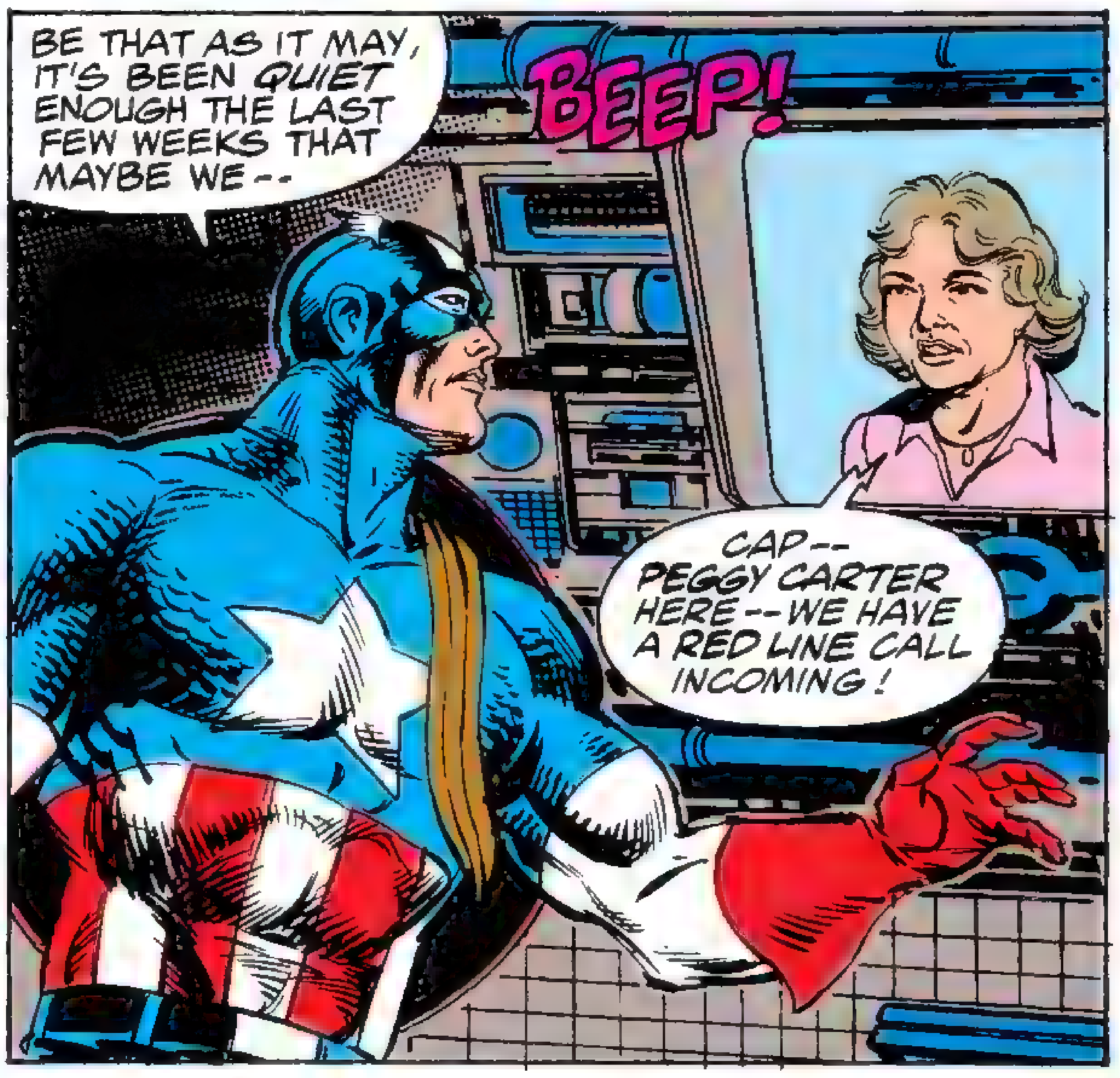

THIRTEEN OFFICERS. ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY RATINGS. SIXTEEN POLARIS SLBM'S. CHEVALINE WARHEADS.
I SEE. MR. WASSEL, ANY HOPE OF ALERTING OUR SUPER-HUMAN RESOURCES? W.H.O.? EXCALIBUR?

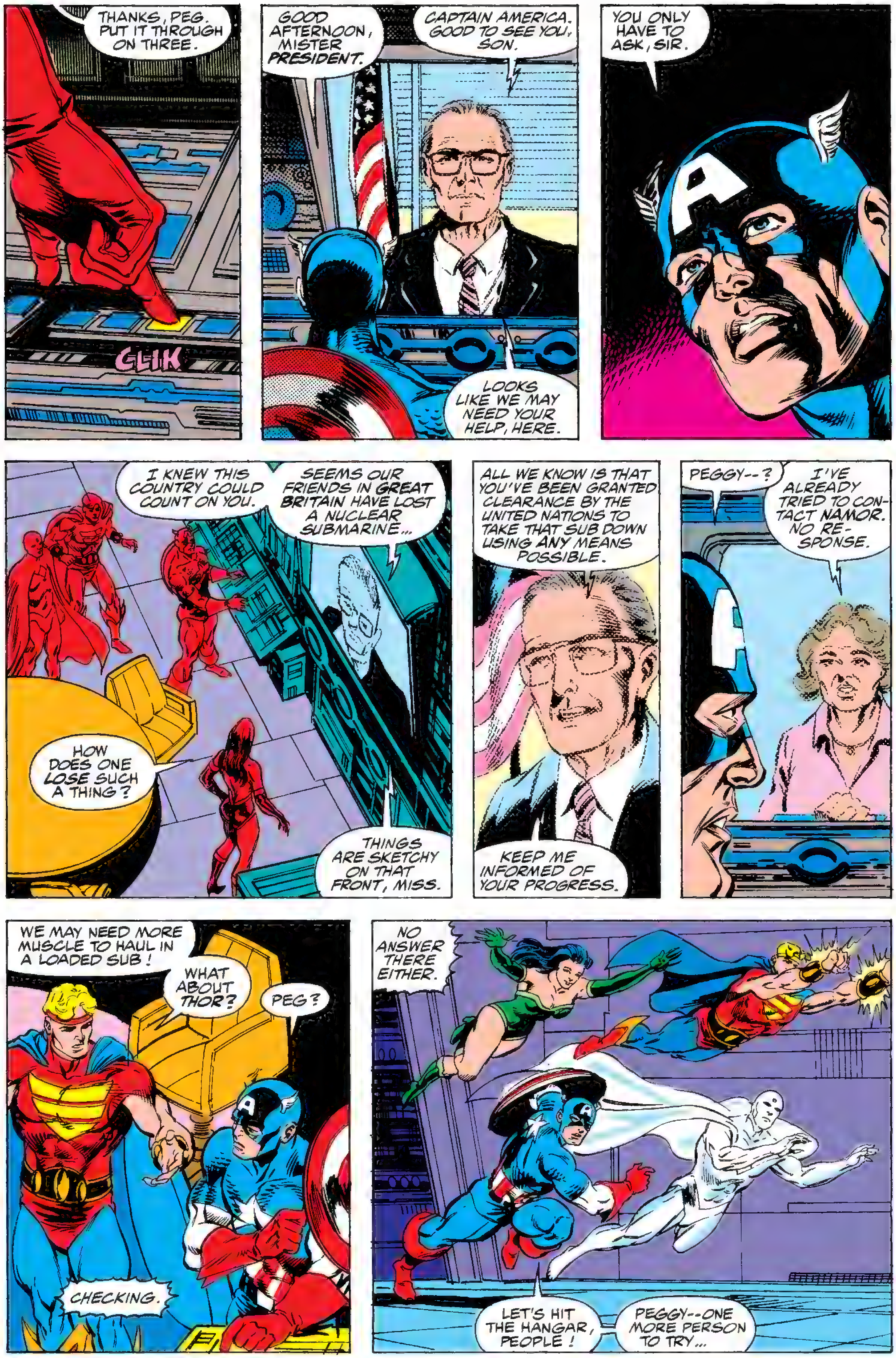

NOT APPROPRIATE. NOT AVAILABLE.
BUT THE SUPER-HUMAN ROUTE MAY BE OUR BEST CHANCE.
STANDARD MILITARY ENGAGEMENT COULD PROVE DISASTROUS.

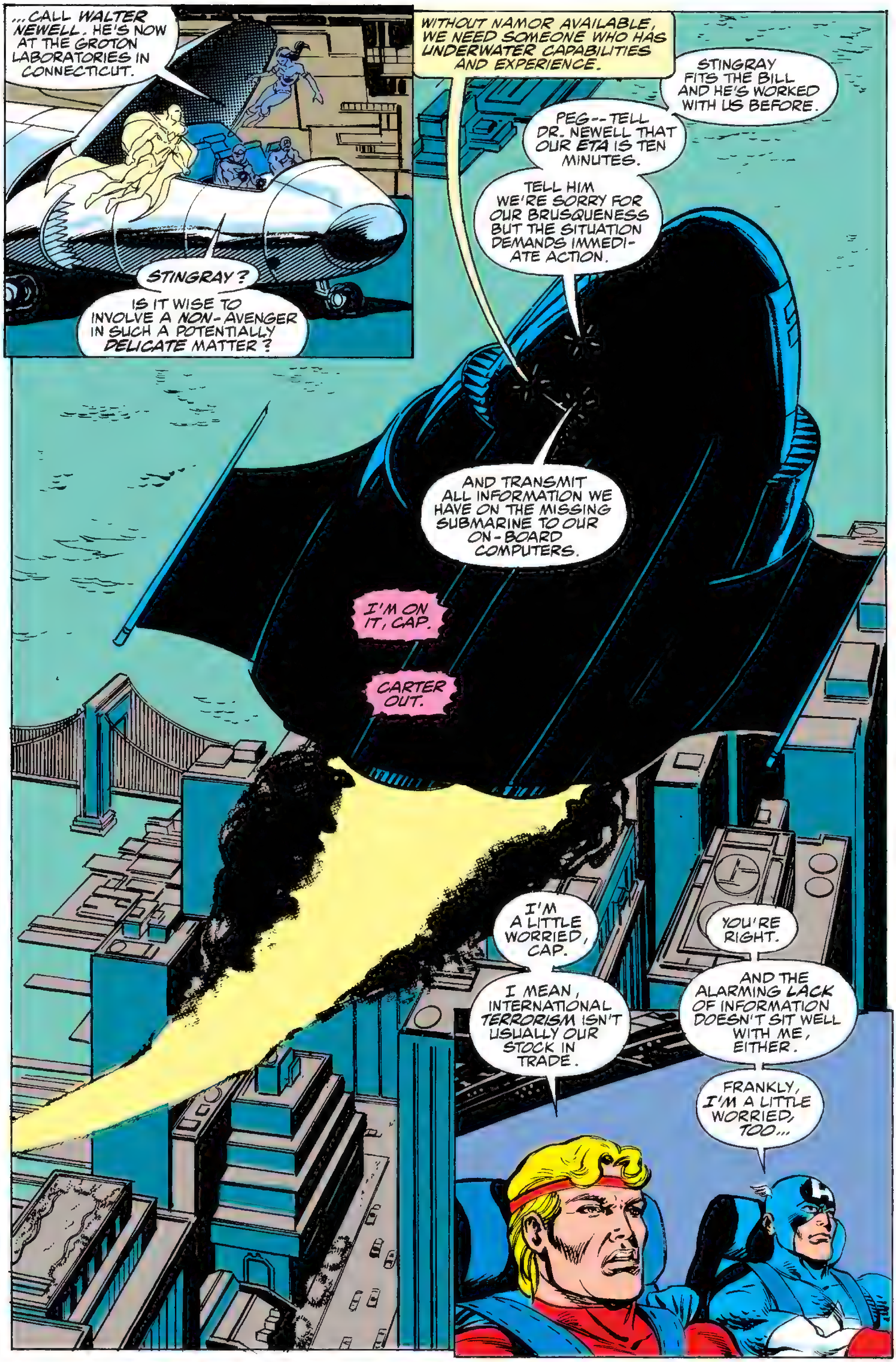

I SEE NO ALTERNATIVE, GENTLEMEN.
ALERT WASHINGTON AND THE UNITED NATIONS.
TELL THEM WE NEED HELP. TELL THEM THE WATERWIND HAS BEEN COMPROMISED!

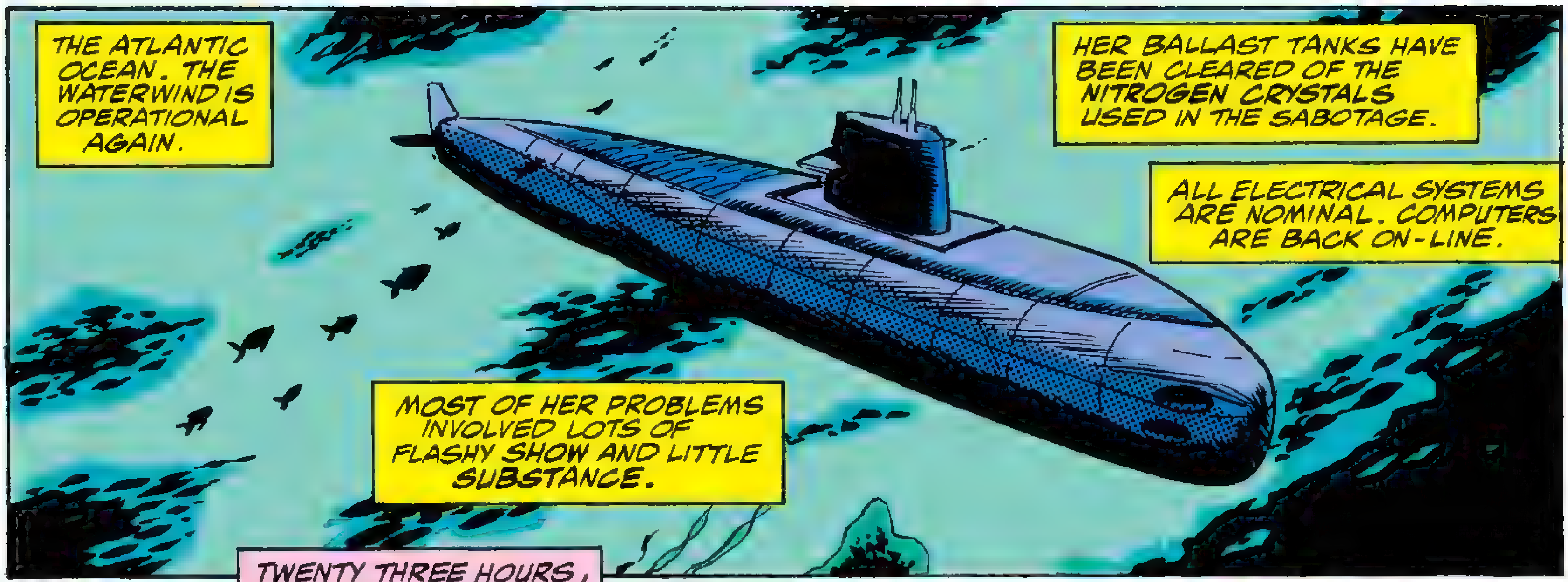

NEW YORK. AVENGERS MANSION, HOME TO EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES. THEY'D BETTER BE ABLE TO LIVE UP TO THAT NAME.
TWENTY FIVE HOURS AND COUNTING...
WELL, IT LOOKS LIKE WE HAVE A QUORUM, SO THE MEETING CAN BEGIN.
FIRST UP, WE CAN REPORT THAT THE MANSION'S RECONSTRUCTION IS PROGRESSING STEADILY, AS IS STARFOX'S RECUPERATION.
ANYTHING WE NEED TO BE UPDATED ON?
QUASAR?
SERSI? VISION?
RECENTLY, I ERECTED AN ENERGY SCREEN AROUND EARTH WHICH WILL ALERT ME TO ANY EXTRATERRESTIAL INTRUSIONS.*
I WILL, OF COURSE, KEEP THE AVENGERS DATABASE FULLY INFORMED OF ANY SUCH EVENTS.
*IT HAPPENED IN QUASAR #12.--HOWARD

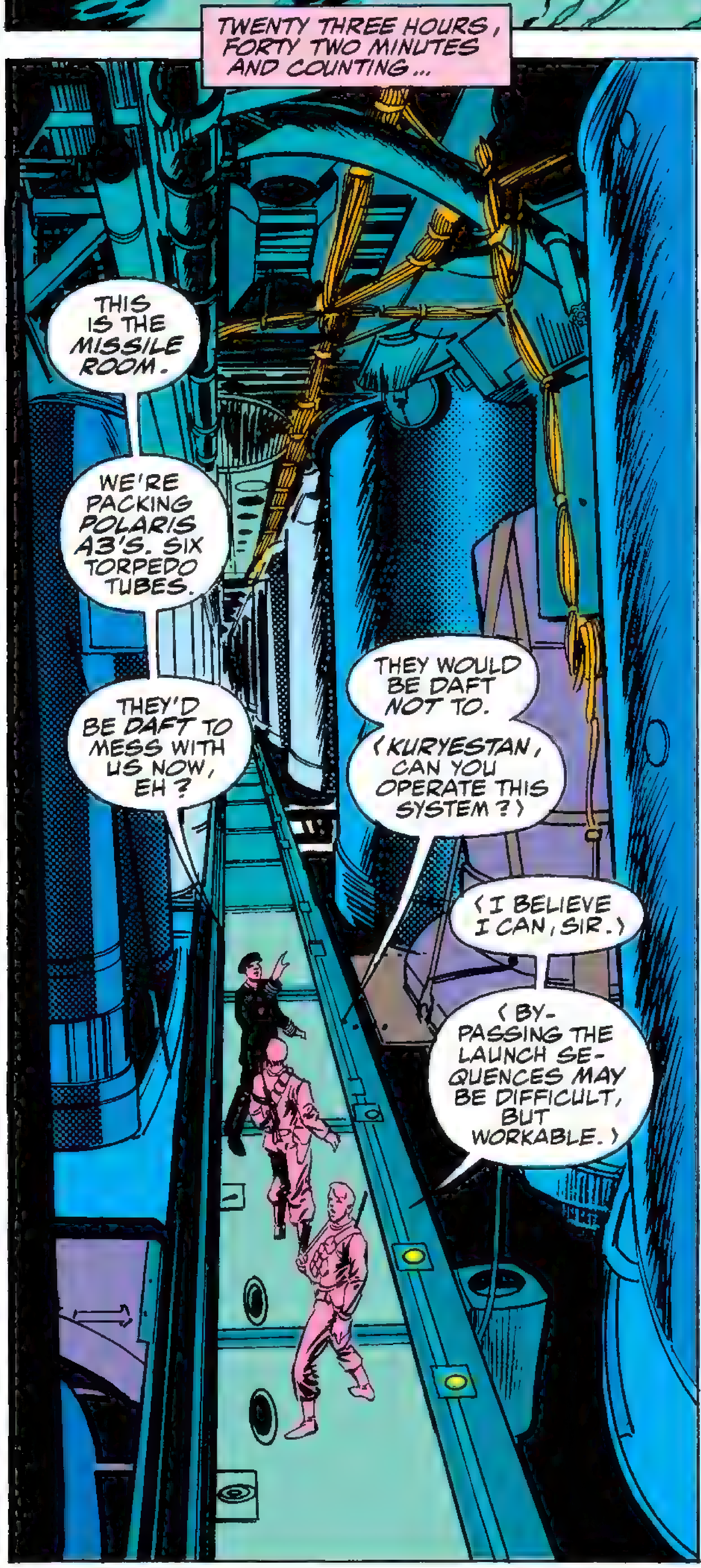

I HAD A SIMPLY MARVELOUS PARTY AT MY LOFT! DOES THAT COUNT, CAPTAIN, DEAR?
I SINCERELY DOUBT THAT YOUR SOCIAL ACTIVITIES COULD IN ANY WAY BE CONSTRUED AS APPROPRIATE AVENGERS BUSINESS, SERSI.

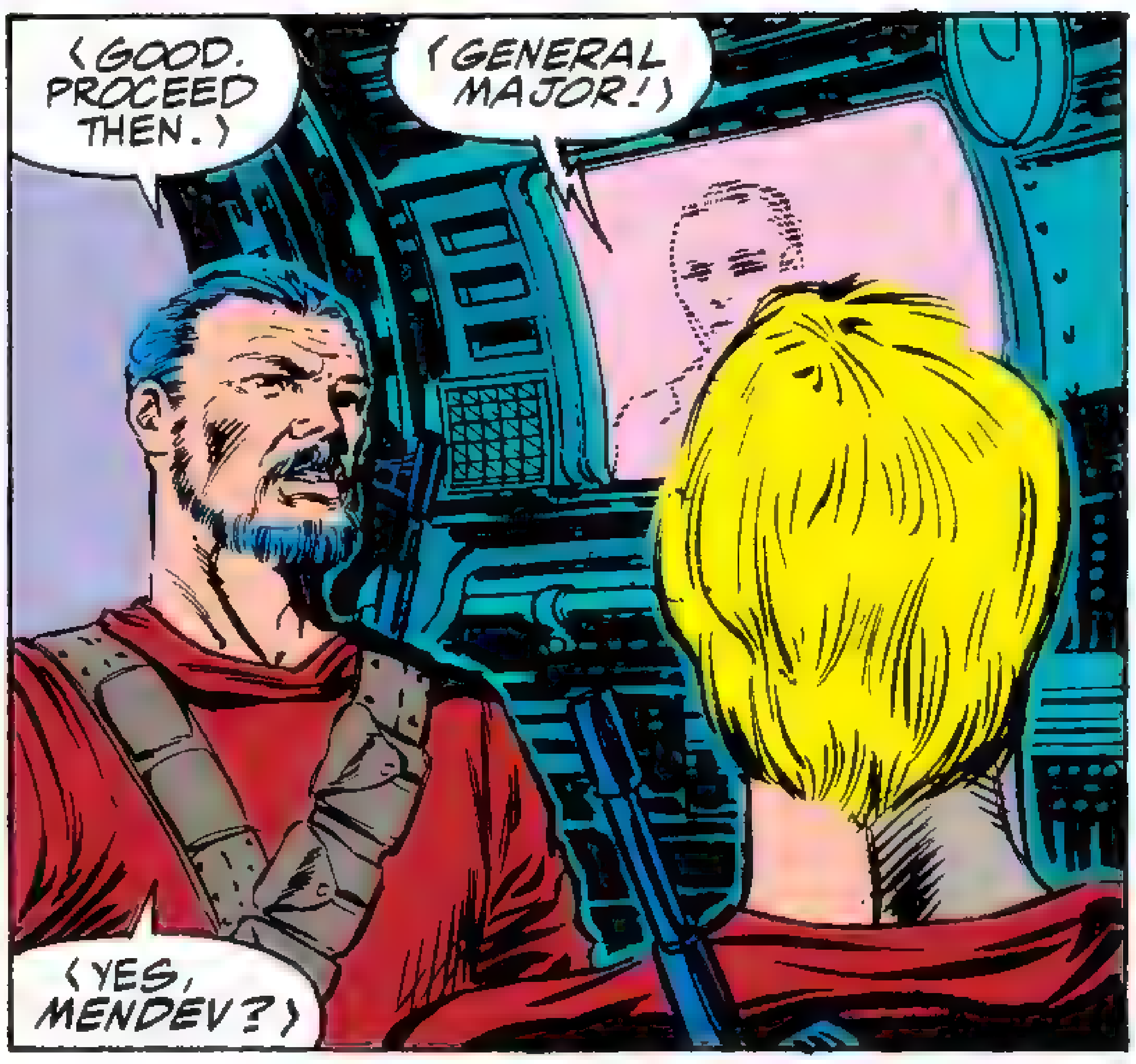

BE THAT AS IT MAY, IT'S BEEN QUIET ENOUGH THE LAST FEW WEEKS THAT MAYBE WE--
BEEP!
CAP--PEGGY CARTER HERE--WE HAVE A RED LINE CALL INCOMING!

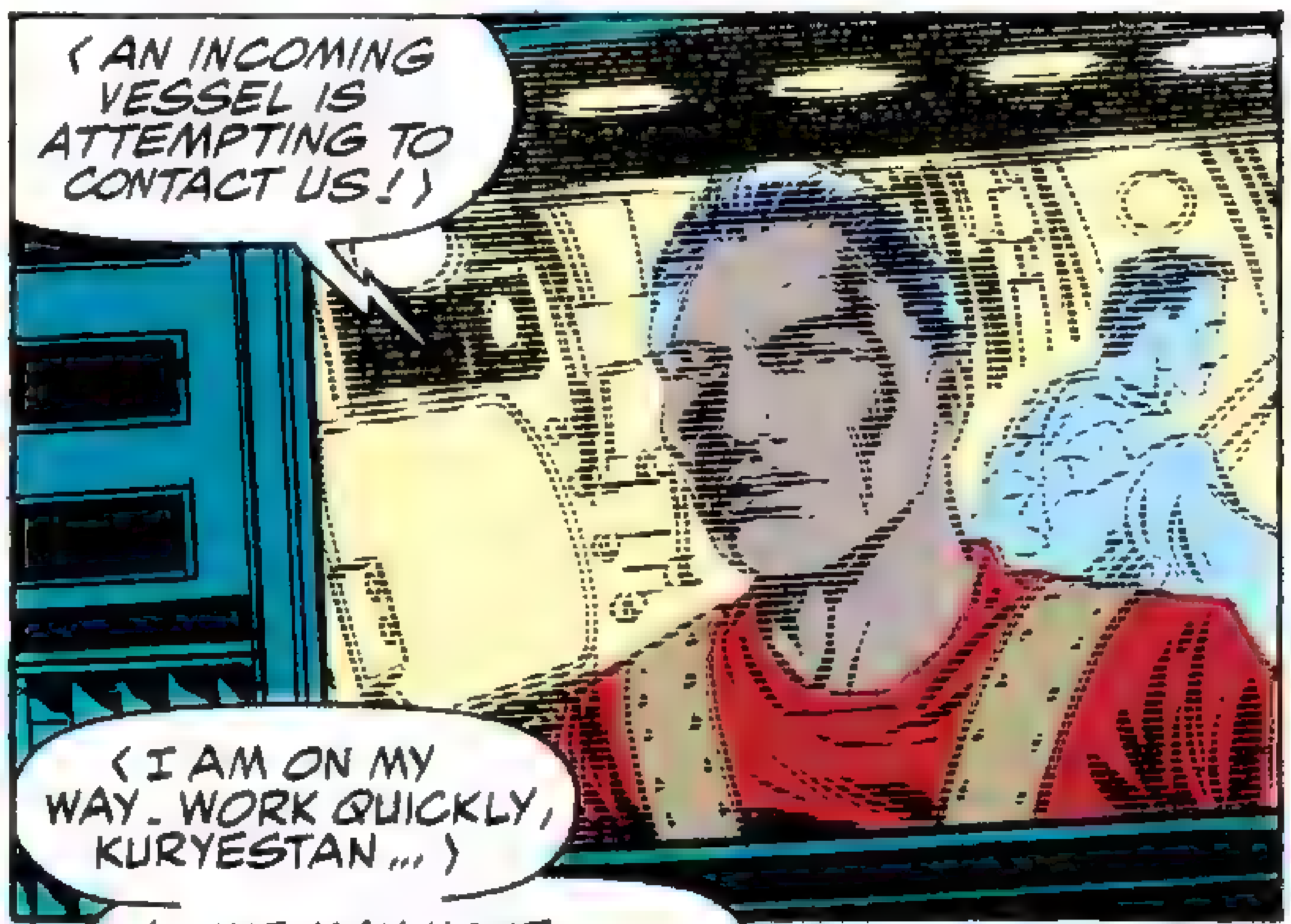

THANKS, PEG. PUT IT THROUGH ON THREE.
CLIK
GOOD AFTERNOON, MISTER PRESIDENT.
CAPTAIN AMERICA. GOOD TO SEE YOU, SON.
LOOKS LIKE WE MAY NEED YOUR HELP, HERE.
YOU ONLY HAVE TO ASK, SIR.
I KNEW THIS COUNTRY COULD COUNT ON YOU.
SEEMS OUR FRIENDS IN GREAT BRITAIN HAVE LOST A NUCLEAR SUBMARINE...
HOW DOES ONE LOSE SUCH A THING?
THINGS ARE SKETCHY ON THAT FRONT, MISS.
ALL WE KNOW IS THAT YOU'VE BEEN GRANTED CLEARANCE BY THE UNITED NATIONS TO TAKE THAT SUB DOWN USING ANY MEANS POSSIBLE.
KEEP ME INFORMED OF YOUR PROGRESS.
PEGGY--?
I'VE ALREADY TRIED TO CONTACT NAMOR. NO RESPONSE.
WE MAY NEED MORE MUSCLE TO HAUL IN A LOADED SUB!
WHAT ABOUT THOR?
PEG?
CHECKING.
NO ANSWER THERE EITHER.
LET'S HIT THE HANGAR, PEOPLE!
PEGGY--ONE MORE PERSON TO TRY...

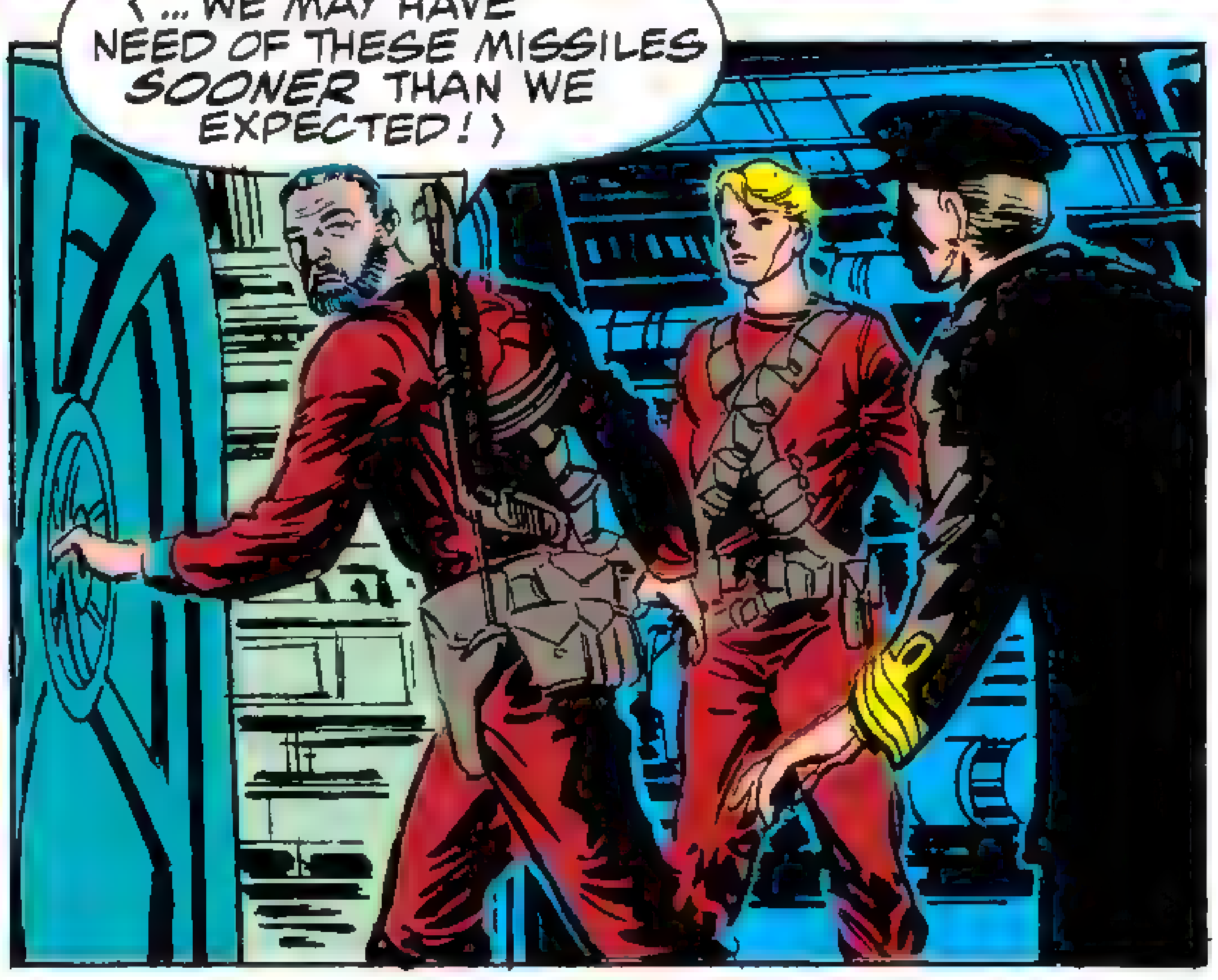

...CALL *WALTER NEWELL*. HE'S NOW AT THE GROTON LABORATORIES IN CONNECTICUT.
STINGRAY?
IS IT WISE TO INVOLVE A *NON*-AVENGER IN SUCH A POTENTIALLY *DELICATE* MATTER?
WITHOUT NAMOR AVAILABLE, WE NEED SOMEONE WHO HAS UNDERWATER CAPABILITIES AND EXPERIENCE.
STINGRAY FITS THE BILL AND HE'S WORKED WITH US BEFORE.
PEG--TELL DR. NEWELL THAT OUR *ETA* IS TEN MINUTES.
TELL HIM WE'RE SORRY FOR OUR BRUSQUENESS BUT THE SITUATION DEMANDS IMMEDIATE ACTION.
AND TRANSMIT ALL INFORMATION WE HAVE ON THE MISSING SUBMARINE TO OUR ON-BOARD COMPUTERS.
I'M ON IT, CAP.
CARTER OUT.
I'M A LITTLE WORRIED, CAP.
I MEAN, INTERNATIONAL *TERRORISM* ISN'T USUALLY OUR STOCK IN TRADE.
YOU'RE RIGHT.
AND THE ALARMING *LACK* OF INFORMATION DOESN'T SIT WELL WITH ME, EITHER.
FRANKLY, *I'M* A LITTLE WORRIED, *TOO*...

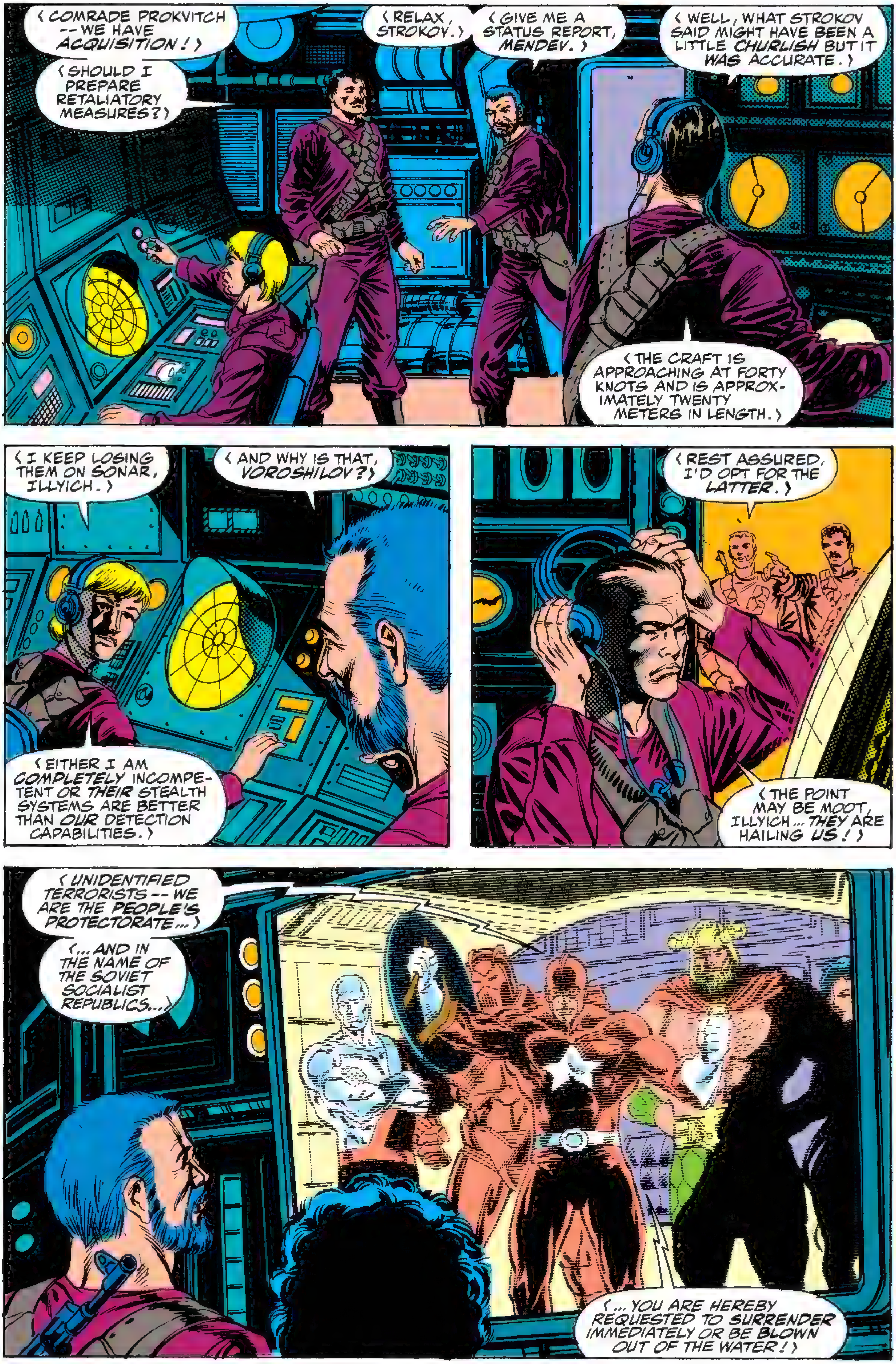

THE ATLANTIC OCEAN. THE WATERWIND IS OPERATIONAL AGAIN.
HER BALLAST TANKS HAVE BEEN CLEARED OF THE NITROGEN CRYSTALS USED IN THE SABOTAGE.
ALL ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS ARE NOMINAL. COMPUTERS ARE BACK ON-LINE.
MOST OF HER PROBLEMS INVOLVED LOTS OF FLASHY SHOW AND LITTLE SUBSTANCE.

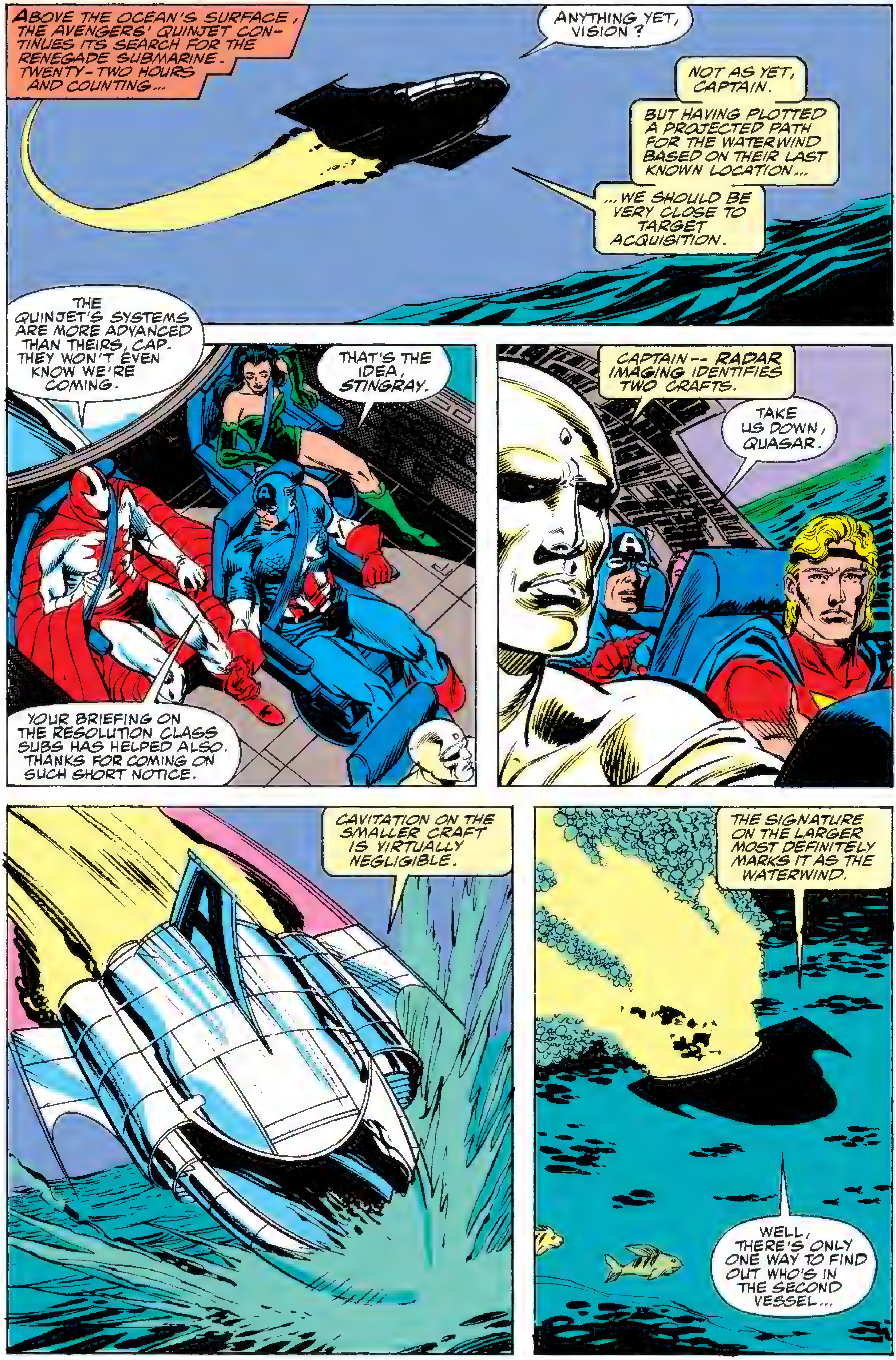

TWENTY THREE HOURS, FORTY TWO MINUTES AND COUNTING...
THIS IS THE MISSILE ROOM.
WE'RE PACKING POLARIS A3'S. SIX TORPEDO TUBES.
THEY'D BE DAFT TO MESS WITH US NOW, EH?
THEY WOULD BE DAFT NOT TO.
‹KURYESTAN, CAN YOU OPERATE THIS SYSTEM?›
‹I BELIEVE I CAN, SIR.›
‹BY-PASSING THE LAUNCH SEQUENCES MAY BE DIFFICULT, BUT WORKABLE.›

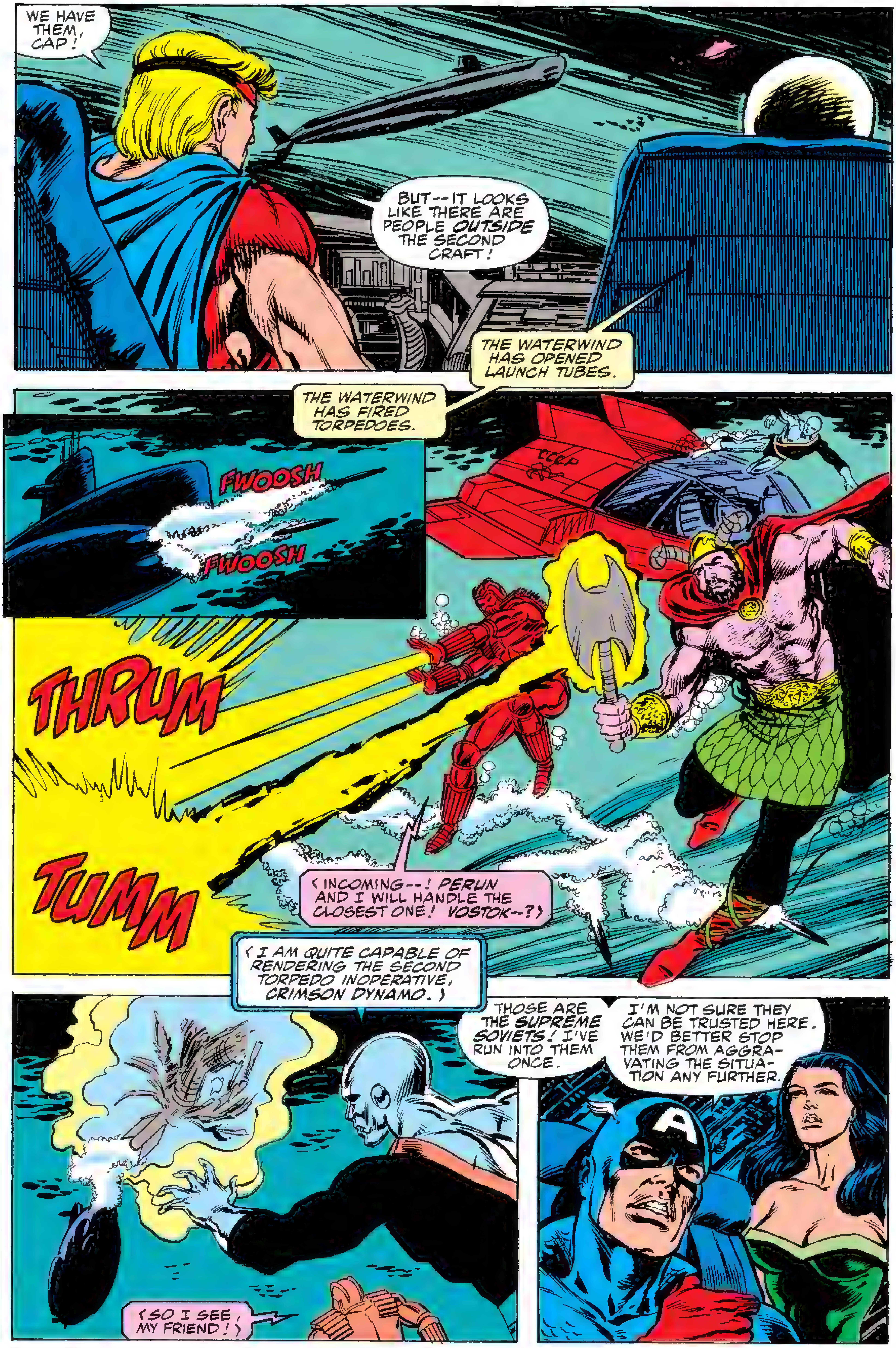

‹GOOD. PROCEED THEN.›
‹GENERAL MAJOR!›
‹YES, MENDEV?›

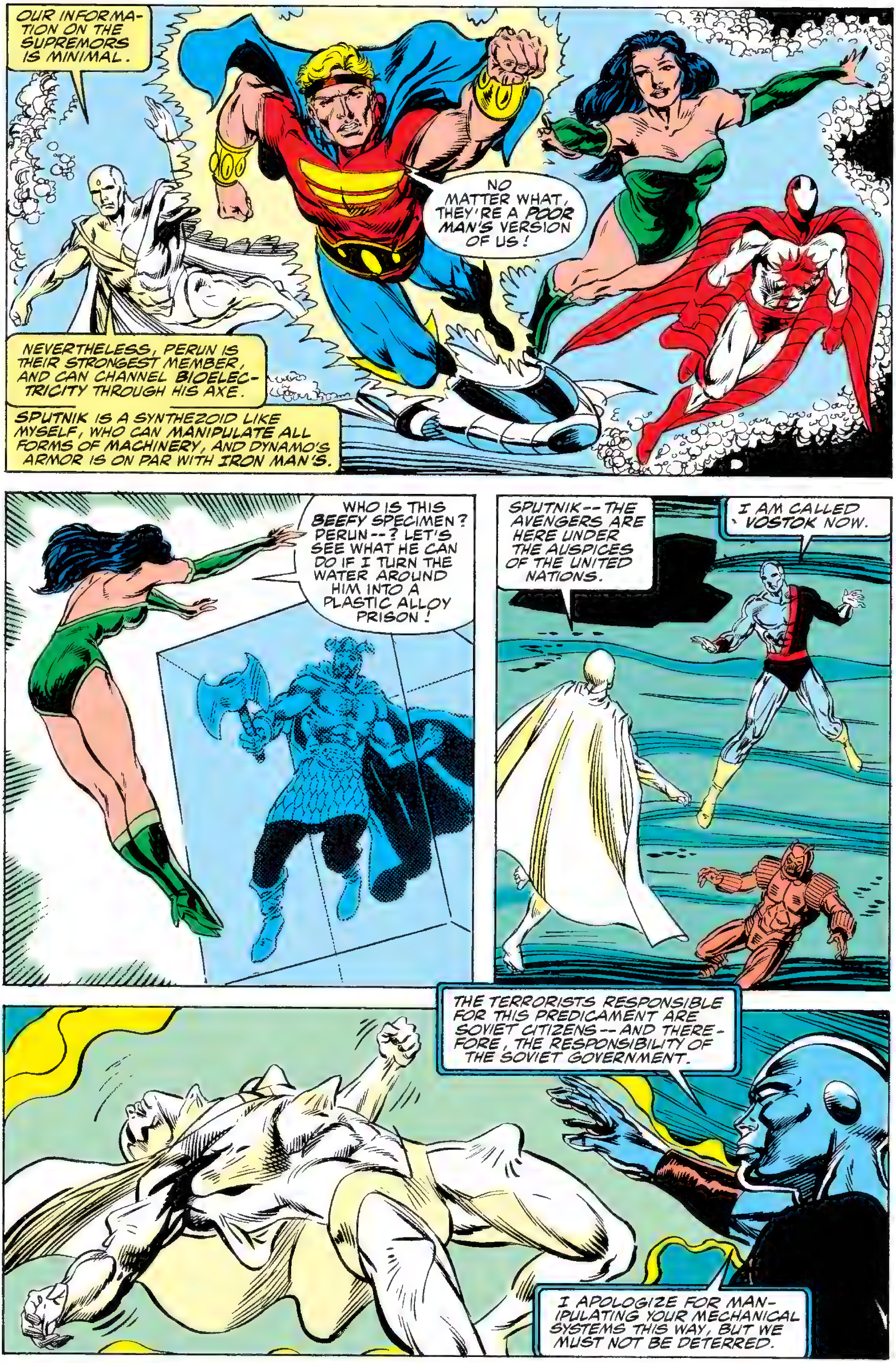

‹AN INCOMING VESSEL IS ATTEMPTING TO CONTACT US!›

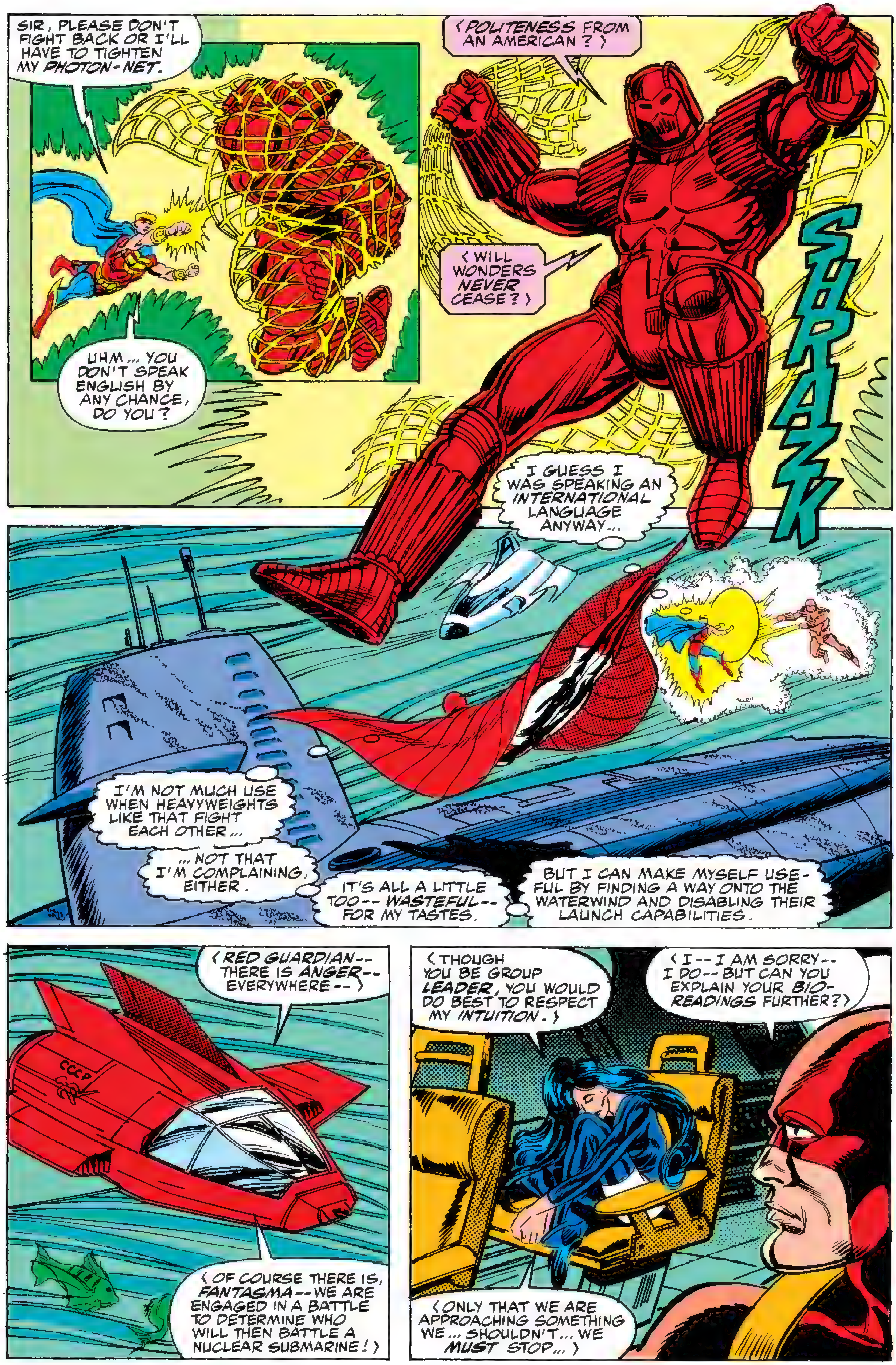

‹I AM ON MY WAY. WORK QUICKLY, KURYESTAN...›
‹...WE MAY HAVE NEED OF THESE MISSILES SOONER THAN WE EXPECTED!›

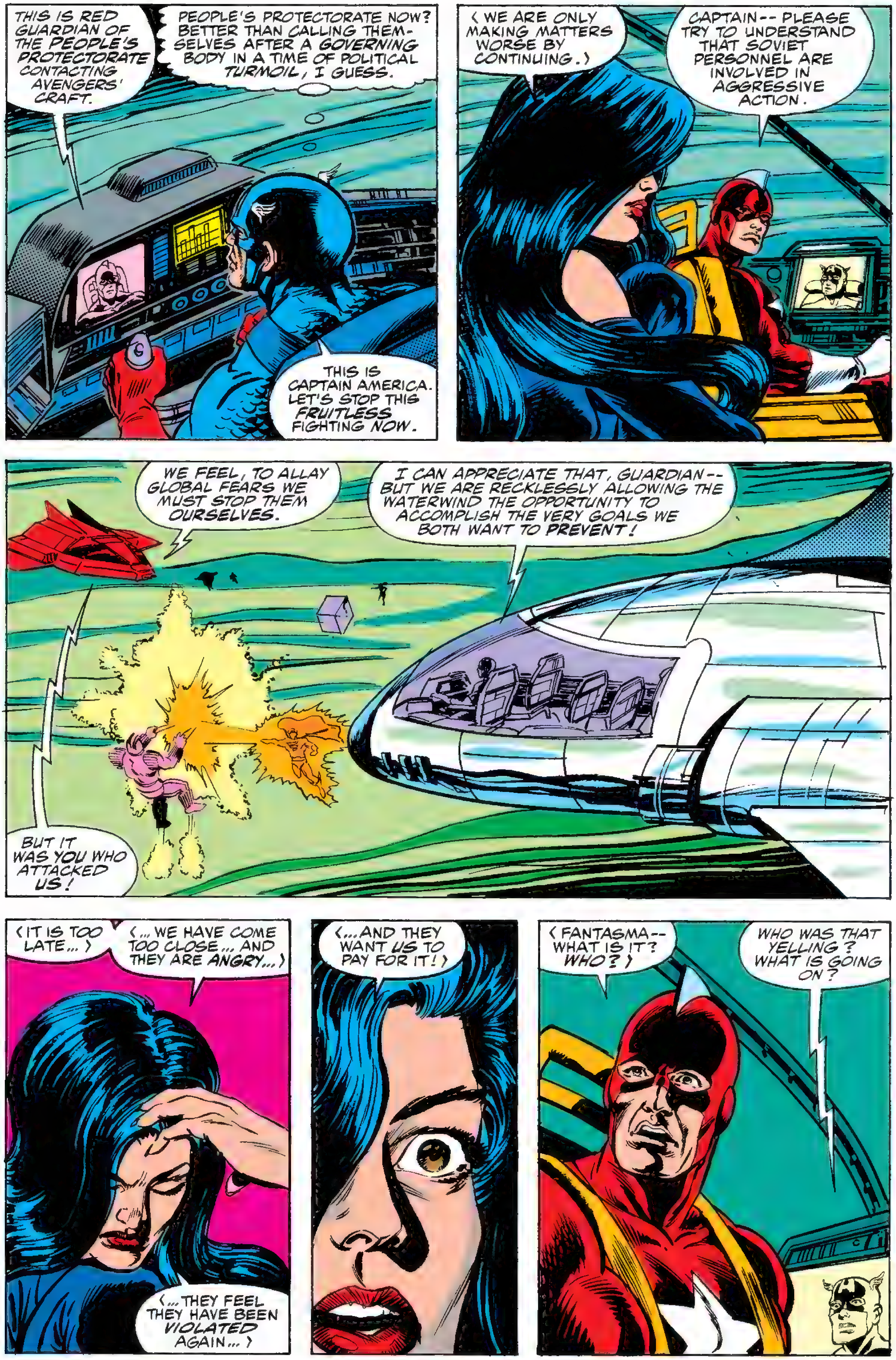

‹ COMRADE PROKVITCH -- WE HAVE ACQUISITION! ›
‹ SHOULD I PREPARE RETALIATORY MEASURES? ›
‹ RELAX, STROKOV. ›
‹ GIVE ME A STATUS REPORT, MENDEV. ›
‹ WELL, WHAT STROKOV SAID MIGHT HAVE BEEN A LITTLE CHURLISH BUT IT WAS ACCURATE. ›
‹ THE CRAFT IS APPROACHING AT FORTY KNOTS AND IS APPROXIMATELY TWENTY METERS IN LENGTH. ›
‹ I KEEP LOSING THEM ON SONAR, ILLYICH. ›
‹ AND WHY IS THAT, VOROSHILOV? ›
‹ EITHER I AM COMPLETELY INCOMPETENT OR THEIR STEALTH SYSTEMS ARE BETTER THAN OUR DETECTION CAPABILITIES. ›
‹ REST ASSURED, I'D OPT FOR THE LATTER. ›
‹ THE POINT MAY BE MOOT, ILLYICH... THEY ARE HAILING US! ›
‹ UNIDENTIFIED TERRORISTS -- WE ARE THE PEOPLE'S PROTECTORATE... ›
‹ ...AND IN THE NAME OF THE SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS... ›
‹ ...YOU ARE HEREBY REQUESTED TO SURRENDER IMMEDIATELY OR BE BLOWN OUT OF THE WATER! ›

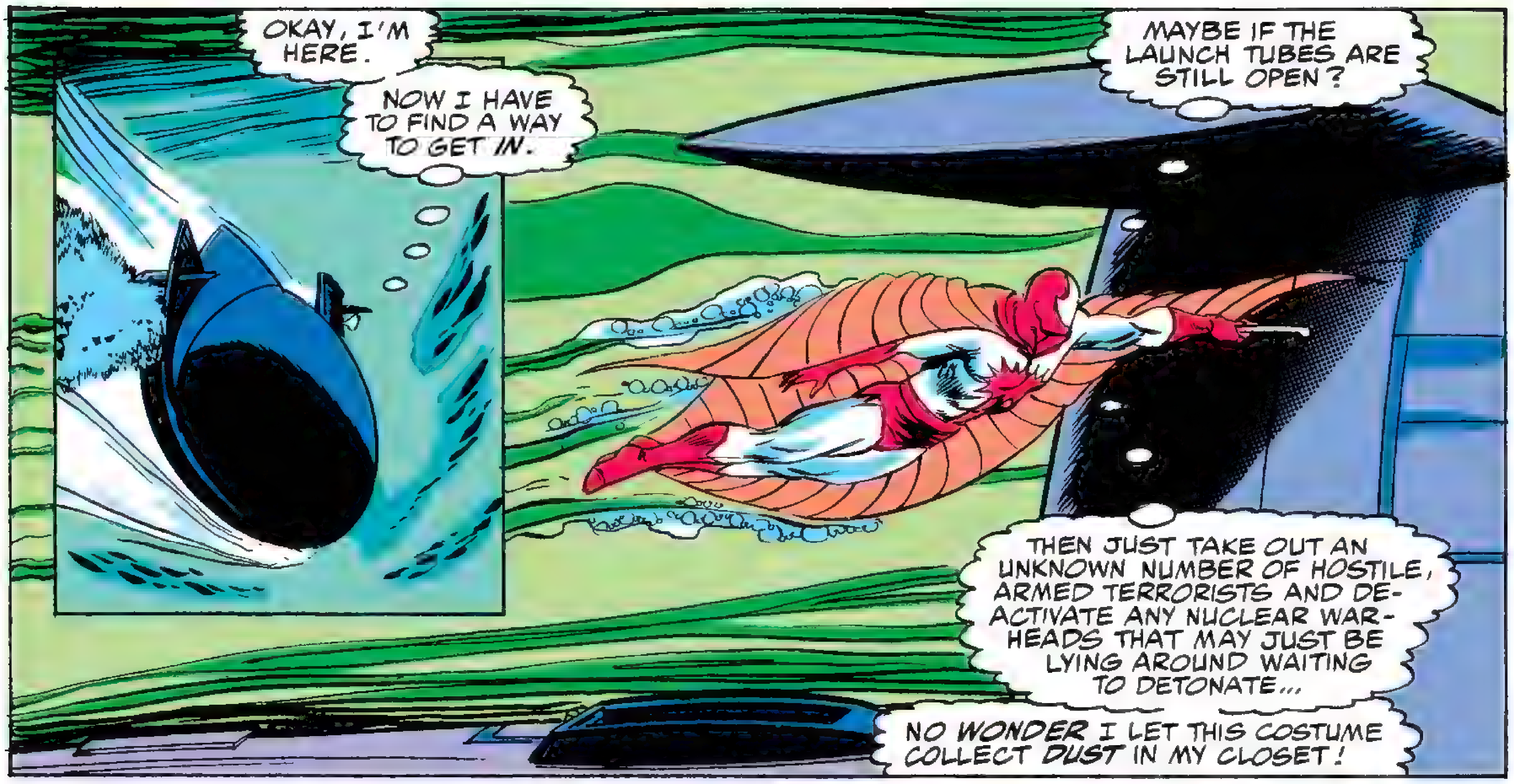

ABOVE THE OCEAN'S SURFACE, THE AVENGERS' QUINJET CONTINUES ITS SEARCH FOR THE RENEGADE SUBMARINE. TWENTY-TWO HOURS AND COUNTING...
ANYTHING YET, VISION?
NOT AS YET, CAPTAIN.
BUT HAVING PLOTTED A PROJECTED PATH FOR THE WATERWIND BASED ON THEIR LAST KNOWN LOCATION...
...WE SHOULD BE VERY CLOSE TO TARGET ACQUISITION.
THE QUINJET'S SYSTEMS ARE MORE ADVANCED THAN THEIRS, CAP. THEY WON'T EVEN KNOW WE'RE COMING.
THAT'S THE IDEA, STINGRAY.
YOUR BRIEFING ON THE RESOLUTION CLASS SUBS HAS HELPED ALSO. THANKS FOR COMING ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE.
CAPTAIN-- RADAR IMAGING IDENTIFIES TWO CRAFTS.
TAKE US DOWN, QUASAR.
CAVITATION ON THE SMALLER CRAFT IS VIRTUALLY NEGLIGIBLE.
THE SIGNATURE ON THE LARGER MOST DEFINITELY MARKS IT AS THE WATERWIND.
WELL, THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT WHO'S IN THE SECOND VESSEL...

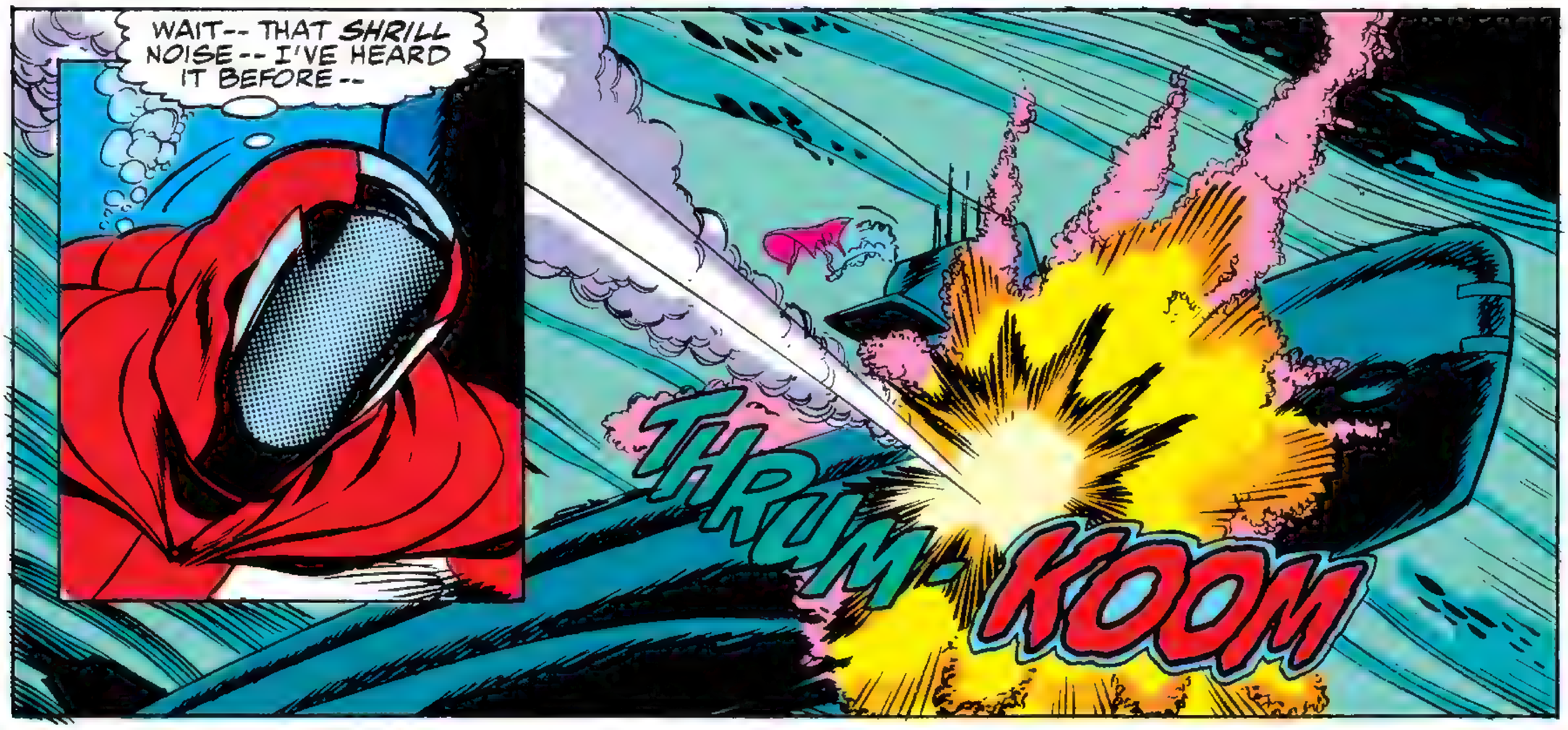

WE HAVE THEM, CAP!
BUT--IT LOOKS LIKE THERE ARE PEOPLE *OUTSIDE* THE SECOND CRAFT!
THE WATERWIND HAS OPENED LAUNCH TUBES.
THE WATERWIND HAS FIRED TORPEDOES.
FWOOSH
FWOOSH
CCCP
THRUM
TUMM
‹INCOMING--! *PERUN* AND I WILL HANDLE THE CLOSEST ONE! *VOSTOK--?*›
‹I AM QUITE CAPABLE OF RENDERING THE SECOND TORPEDO INOPERATIVE, CRIMSON DYNAMO.›
‹SO I SEE, MY FRIEND!›
THOSE ARE THE *SUPREME SOVIETS!* I'VE RUN INTO THEM ONCE.
I'M NOT SURE THEY CAN BE TRUSTED HERE. WE'D BETTER STOP THEM FROM AGGRAVATING THE SITUATION ANY FURTHER.

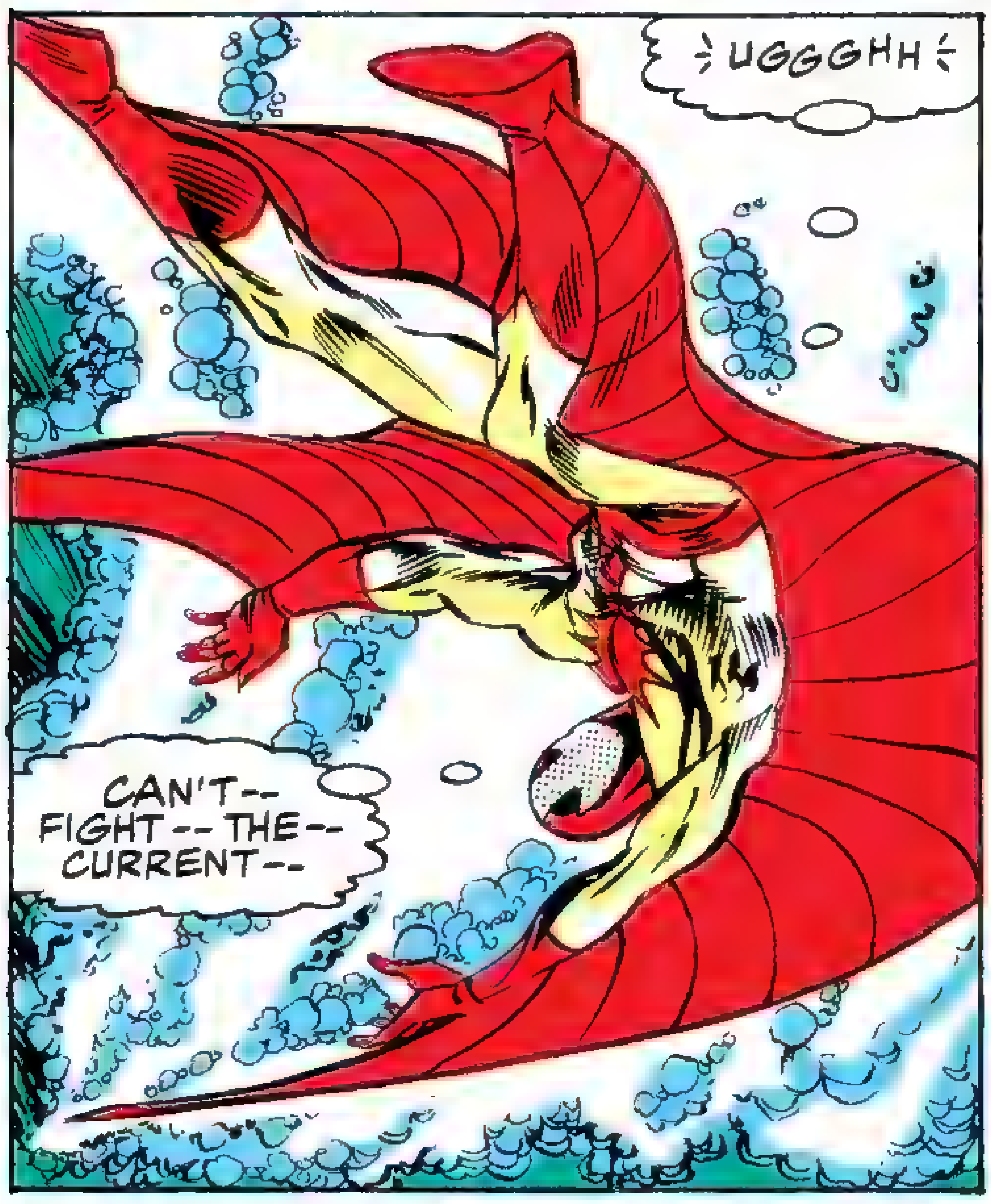

OUR INFORMATION ON THE SUPREMORS IS MINIMAL.
NO MATTER WHAT, THEY'RE A *POOR MAN'S* VERSION OF US!
NEVERTHELESS, PERUN IS THEIR STRONGEST MEMBER, AND CAN CHANNEL *BIOELECTRICITY* THROUGH HIS AXE.
SPUTNIK IS A SYNTHEZOID LIKE MYSELF, WHO CAN MANIPULATE ALL FORMS OF MACHINERY, AND DYNAMO'S ARMOR IS ON PAR WITH *IRON MAN'S*.
WHO IS THIS *BEEFY SPECIMEN*? PERUN--? LET'S SEE WHAT HE CAN DO IF I TURN THE WATER AROUND HIM INTO A PLASTIC ALLOY PRISON!
SPUTNIK--THE AVENGERS ARE HERE UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE UNITED NATIONS.
I AM CALLED *VOSTOK* NOW.
THE TERRORISTS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS PREDICAMENT ARE SOVIET CITIZENS--AND THEREFORE, THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT.
I APOLOGIZE FOR MANIPULATING YOUR MECHANICAL SYSTEMS THIS WAY, BUT WE MUST NOT BE DETERRED.

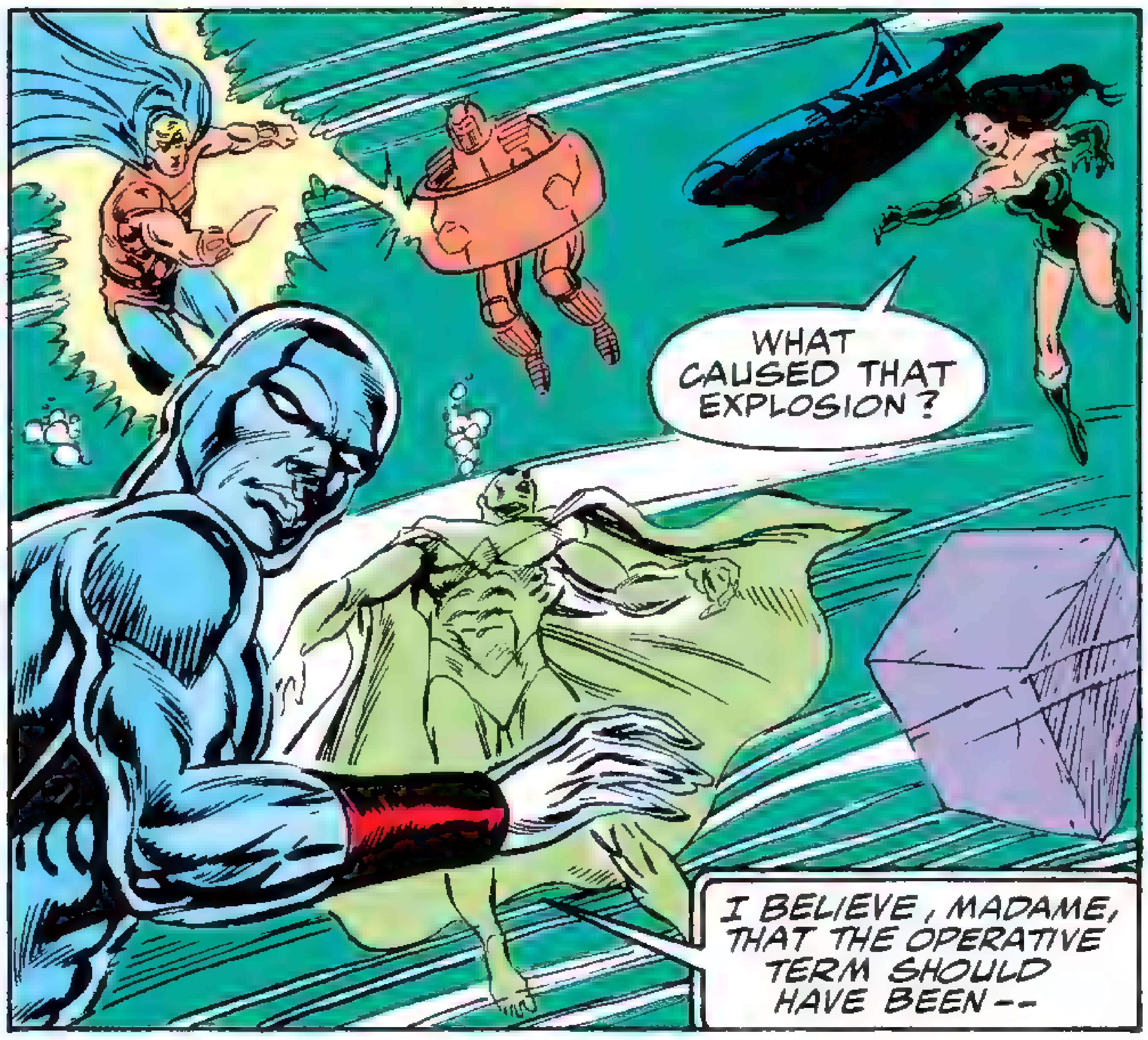

SIR, PLEASE DON'T FIGHT BACK OR I'LL HAVE TO TIGHTEN MY *PHOTON-NET*.
UHM... YOU DON'T SPEAK ENGLISH BY ANY CHANCE, DO YOU?
‹*POLITENESS* FROM AN AMERICAN?›
‹WILL WONDERS *NEVER* CEASE?›
SHRAKK
I GUESS I WAS SPEAKING AN *INTERNATIONAL* LANGUAGE ANYWAY...
I'M NOT MUCH USE WHEN HEAVYWEIGHTS LIKE THAT FIGHT EACH OTHER...
...NOT THAT I'M COMPLAINING, EITHER.
IT'S ALL A LITTLE TOO-- *WASTEFUL*-- FOR MY TASTES.
BUT I CAN MAKE MYSELF USEFUL BY FINDING A WAY ONTO THE WATERWIND AND DISABLING THEIR LAUNCH CAPABILITIES.
‹*RED GUARDIAN*-- THERE IS *ANGER*-- EVERYWHERE--›
CCCP
‹OF COURSE THERE IS, *FANTASMA*--WE ARE ENGAGED IN A BATTLE TO DETERMINE WHO WILL THEN BATTLE A NUCLEAR SUBMARINE!›
‹THOUGH YOU BE GROUP *LEADER*, YOU WOULD DO BEST TO RESPECT MY *INTUITION*.›
‹I-- I AM SORRY-- I DO-- BUT CAN YOU EXPLAIN YOUR *BIO-READINGS* FURTHER?›
‹ONLY THAT WE ARE APPROACHING SOMETHING WE... SHOULDN'T... WE *MUST* STOP...›

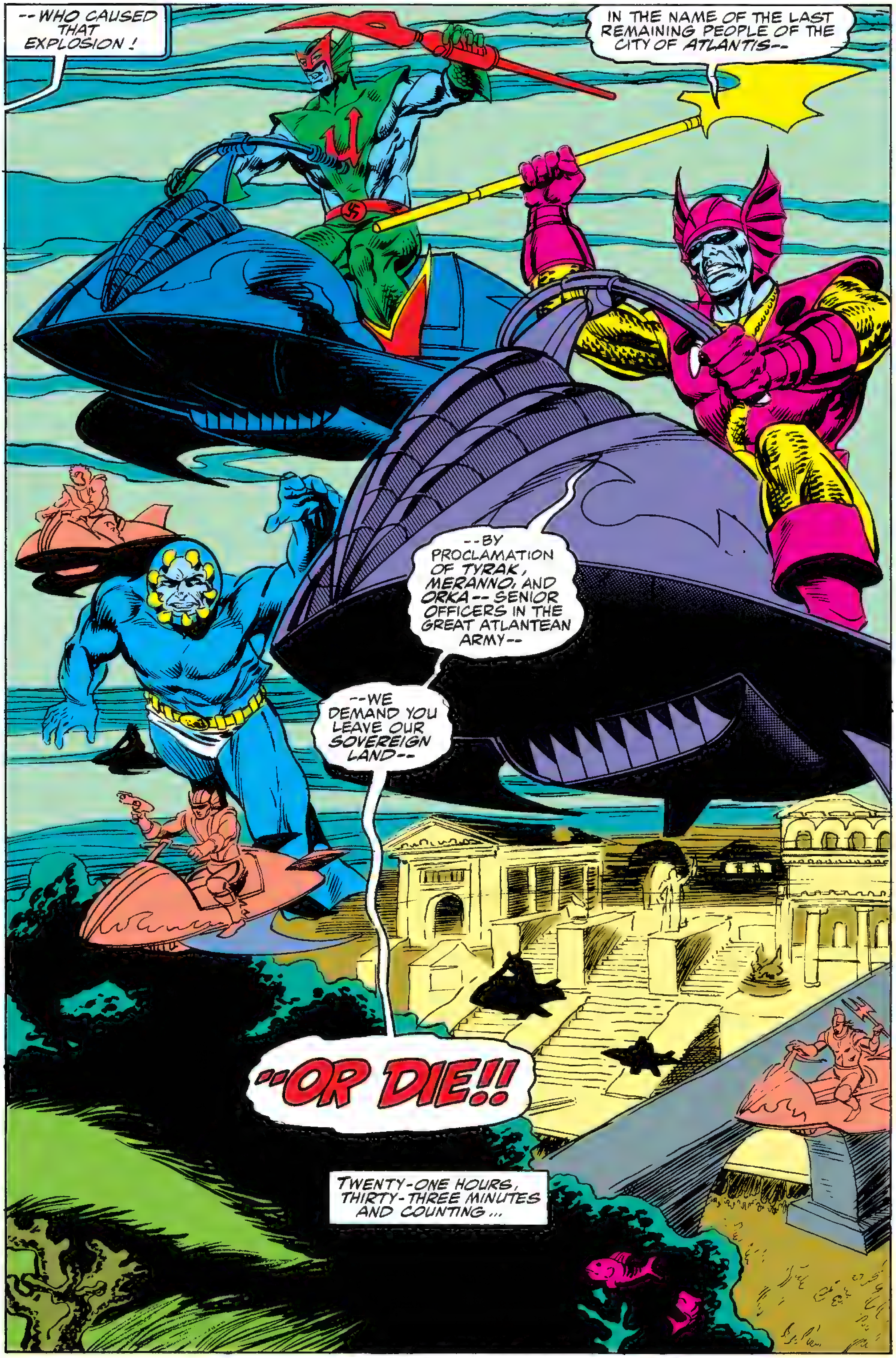

THIS IS RED GUARDIAN OF THE PEOPLE'S PROTECTORATE CONTACTING AVENGERS' CRAFT.
PEOPLE'S PROTECTORATE NOW? BETTER THAN CALLING THEMSELVES AFTER A GOVERNING BODY IN A TIME OF POLITICAL TURMOIL, I GUESS.
THIS IS CAPTAIN AMERICA. LET'S STOP THIS FRUITLESS FIGHTING NOW.
‹ WE ARE ONLY MAKING MATTERS WORSE BY CONTINUING. ›
CAPTAIN-- PLEASE TRY TO UNDERSTAND THAT SOVIET PERSONNEL ARE INVOLVED IN AGGRESSIVE ACTION.
WE FEEL, TO ALLAY GLOBAL FEARS WE MUST STOP THEM OURSELVES.
I CAN APPRECIATE THAT, GUARDIAN-- BUT WE ARE RECKLESSLY ALLOWING THE WATERWIND THE OPPORTUNITY TO ACCOMPLISH THE VERY GOALS WE BOTH WANT TO PREVENT!
BUT IT WAS YOU WHO ATTACKED US!
‹ IT IS TOO LATE... ›
‹ ...WE HAVE COME TOO CLOSE... AND THEY ARE ANGRY... ›
‹ ...THEY FEEL THEY HAVE BEEN VIOLATED AGAIN... ›
‹ ...AND THEY WANT US TO PAY FOR IT! ›
‹ FANTASMA-- WHAT IS IT? WHO? ›
WHO WAS THAT YELLING? WHAT IS GOING ON?


OKAY, I'M HERE.
NOW I HAVE TO FIND A WAY TO GET *IN*.
MAYBE IF THE LAUNCH TUBES ARE STILL OPEN?
THEN JUST TAKE OUT AN UNKNOWN NUMBER OF HOSTILE, ARMED TERRORISTS AND DEACTIVATE ANY NUCLEAR WARHEADS THAT MAY JUST BE LYING AROUND WAITING TO DETONATE...
NO *WONDER* I LET THIS COSTUME COLLECT *DUST* IN MY CLOSET!


WAIT-- THAT *SHRILL* NOISE-- I'VE HEARD IT BEFORE--
THRUM-KOOM


UGGGHH
CAN'T-- FIGHT-- THE-- CURRENT--

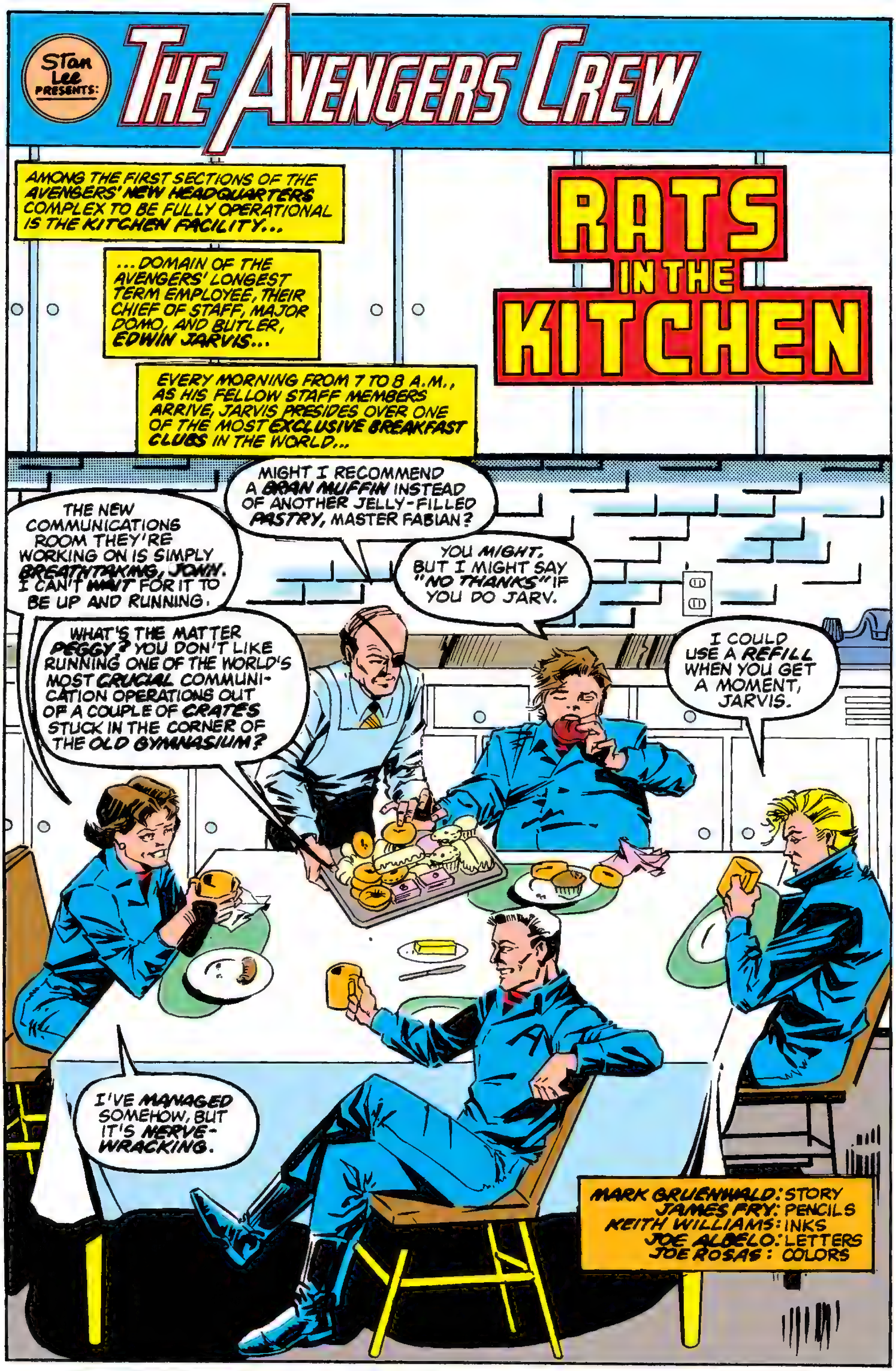

WHAT CAUSED THAT EXPLOSION?
I BELIEVE, MADAME, THAT THE OPERATIVE TERM SHOULD HAVE BEEN--


--WHO CAUSED THAT EXPLOSION!
IN THE NAME OF THE LAST REMAINING PEOPLE OF THE CITY OF *ATLANTIS*--
--BY PROCLAMATION OF *TYRAK, MERANNO,* AND *ORKA*-- SENIOR OFFICERS IN THE GREAT ATLANTEAN ARMY--
--WE DEMAND YOU LEAVE OUR *SOVEREIGN* LAND--
--OR DIE!!
TWENTY-ONE HOURS, THIRTY-THREE MINUTES AND COUNTING...

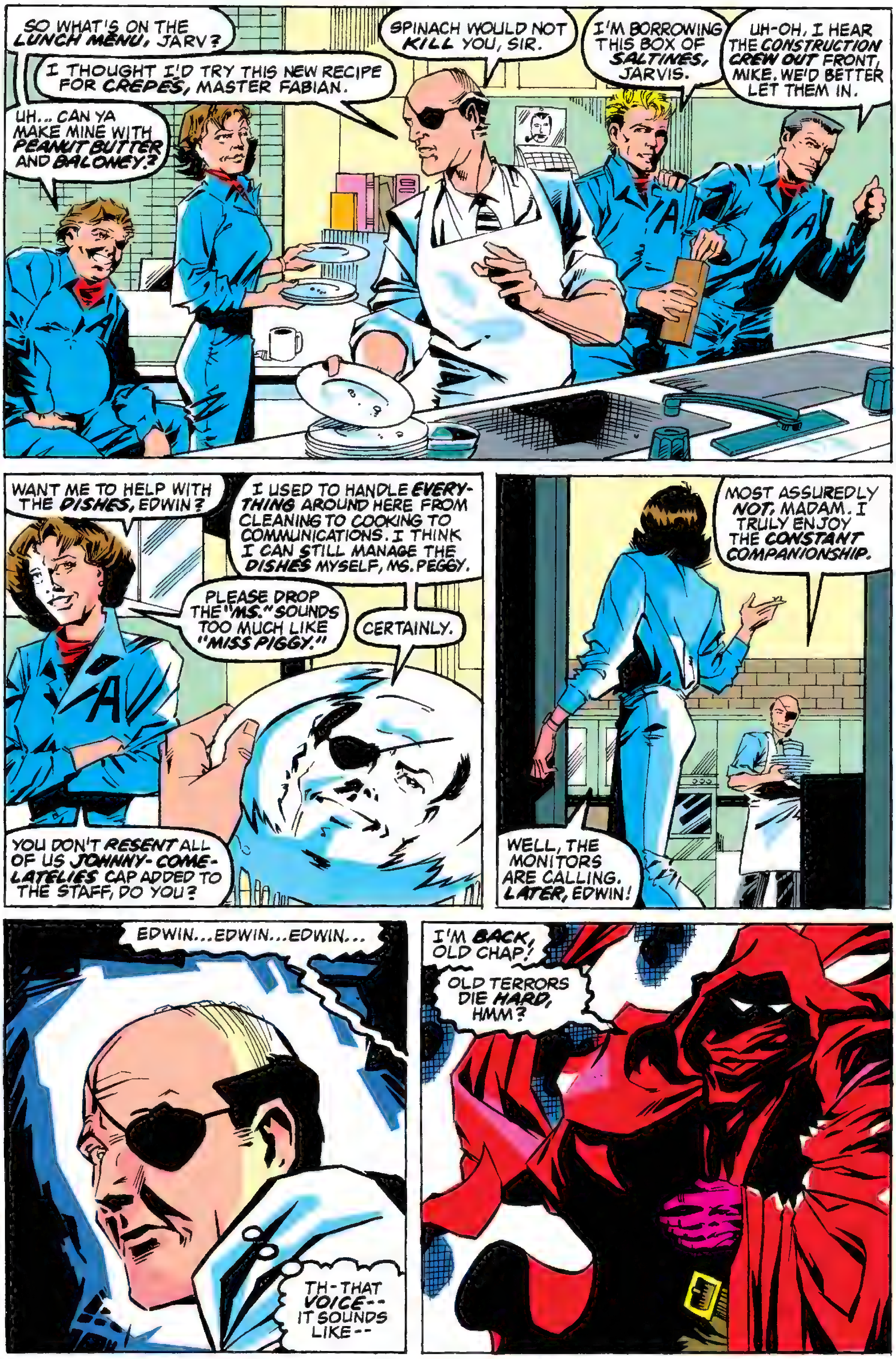
Stan Lee presents:

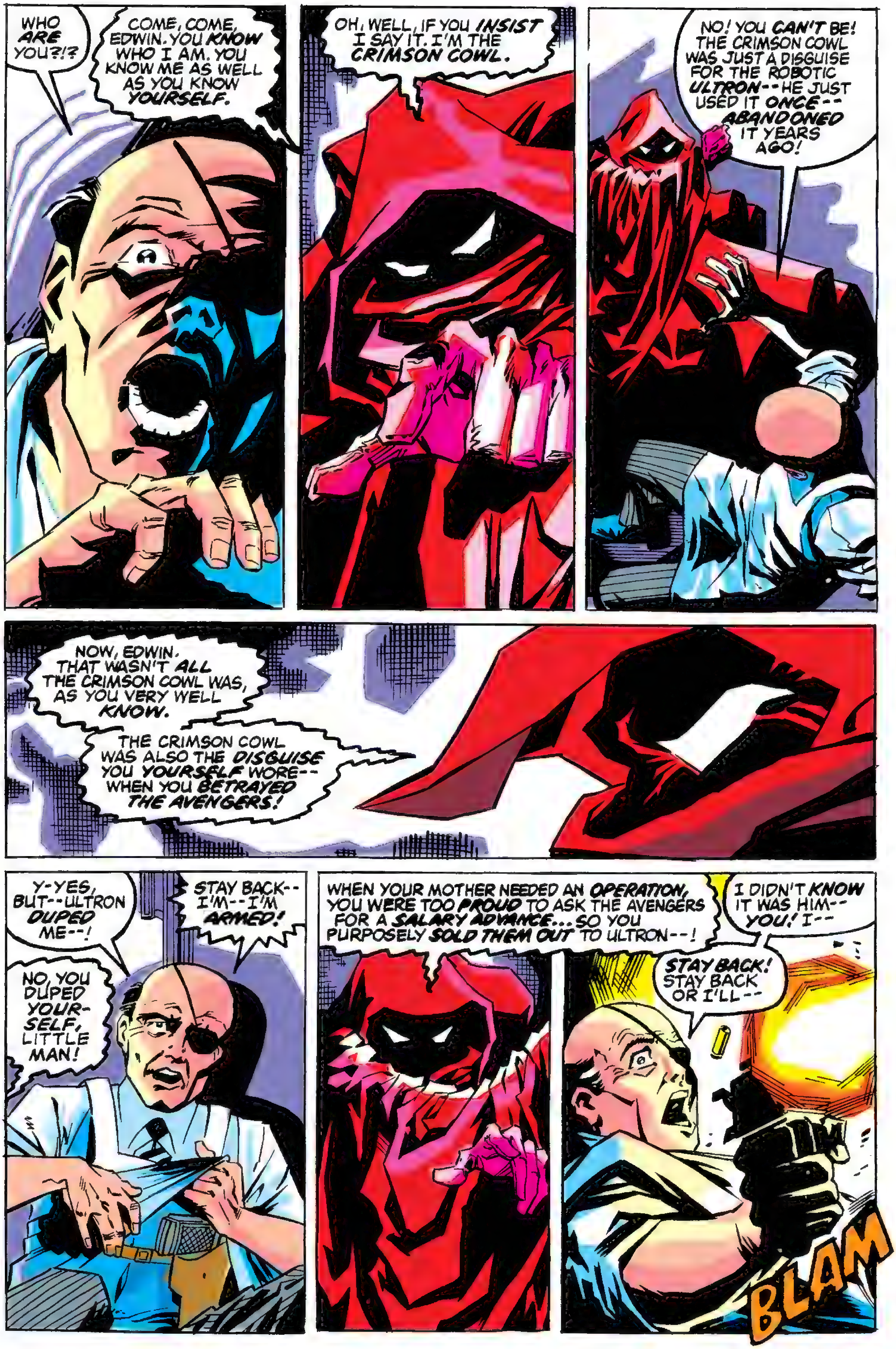
THE AVENGERS CREW

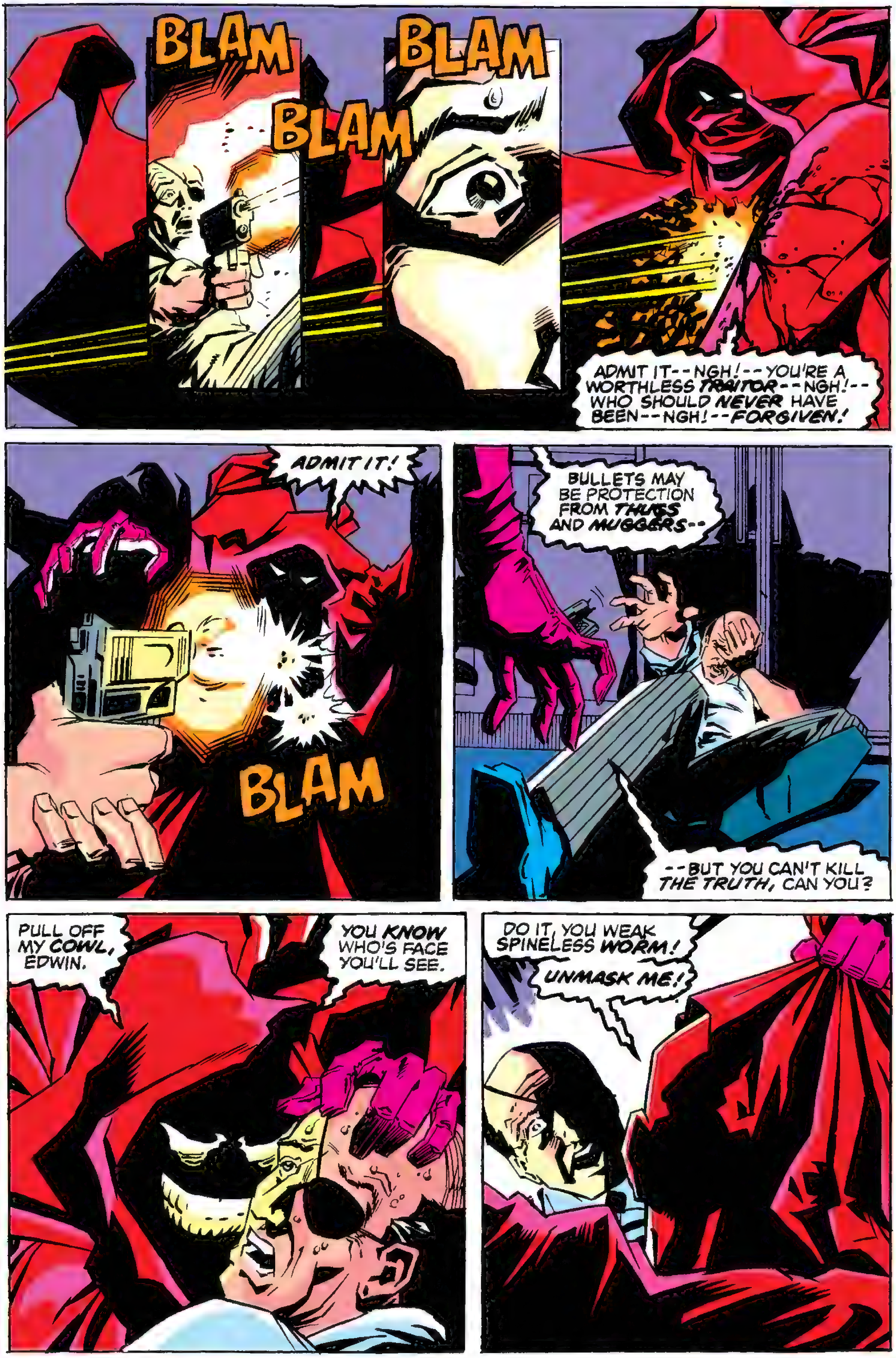
RATS IN THE KITCHEN

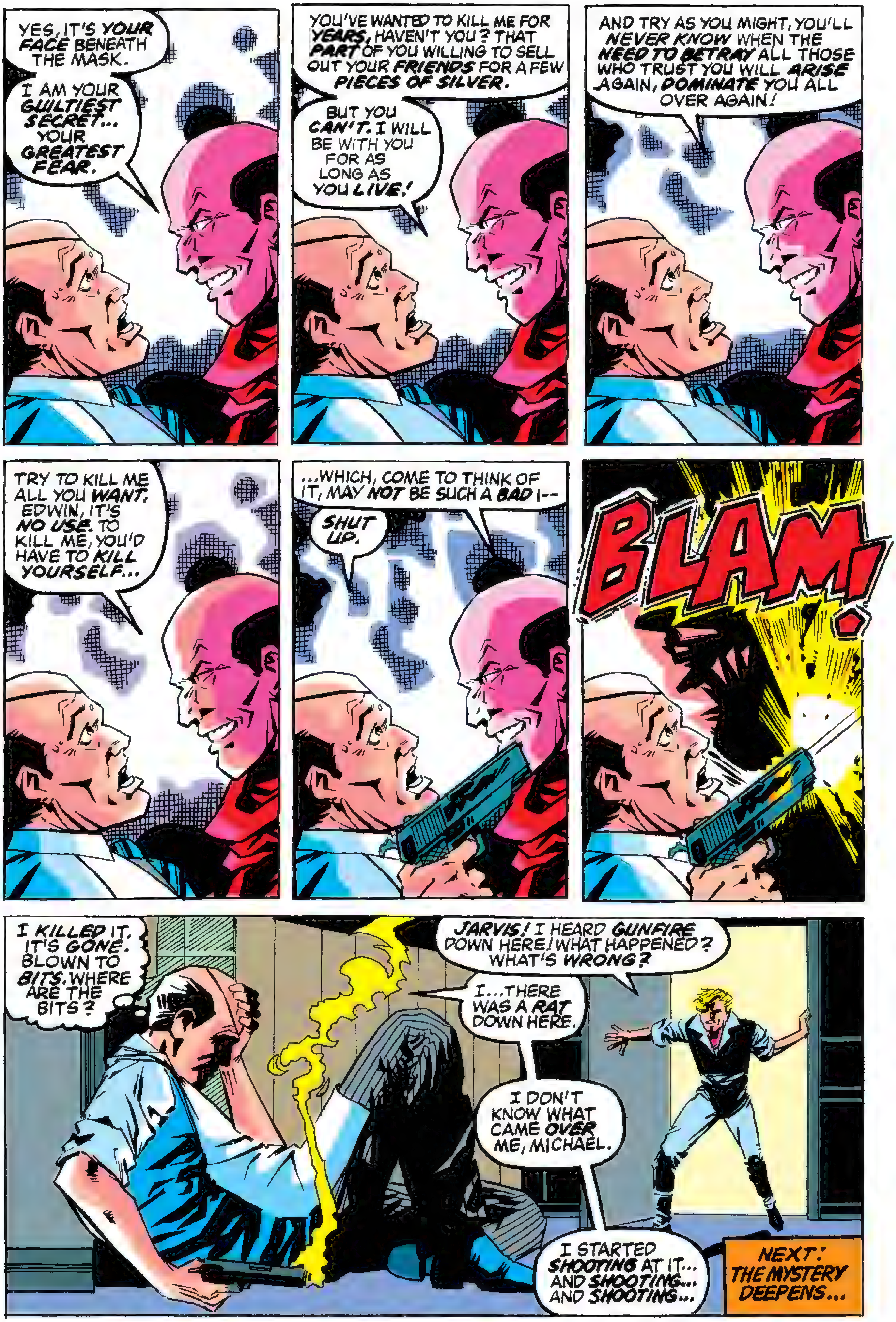

AMONG THE FIRST SECTIONS OF THE AVENGERS' NEW HEADQUARTERS COMPLEX TO BE FULLY OPERATIONAL IS THE KITCHEN FACILITY...
...DOMAIN OF THE AVENGERS' LONGEST TERM EMPLOYEE, THEIR CHIEF OF STAFF, MAJOR DOMO, AND BUTLER, EDWIN JARVIS...
EVERY MORNING FROM 7 TO 8 A.M., AS HIS FELLOW STAFF MEMBERS ARRIVE, JARVIS PRESIDES OVER ONE OF THE MOST EXCLUSIVE BREAKFAST CLUBS IN THE WORLD...
THE NEW COMMUNICATIONS ROOM THEY'RE WORKING ON IS SIMPLY BREATHTAKING, JOHN. I CAN'T WAIT FOR IT TO BE UP AND RUNNING.
MIGHT I RECOMMEND A BRAN MUFFIN INSTEAD OF ANOTHER JELLY-FILLED PASTRY, MASTER FABIAN?
YOU MIGHT. BUT I MIGHT SAY "NO THANKS" IF YOU DO JARV.
WHAT'S THE MATTER PEGGY? YOU DON'T LIKE RUNNING ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST CRUCIAL COMMUNICATION OPERATIONS OUT OF A COUPLE OF CRATES STUCK IN THE CORNER OF THE OLD GYMNASIUM?
I COULD USE A REFILL WHEN YOU GET A MOMENT, JARVIS.
I'VE MANAGED SOMEHOW, BUT IT'S NERVE-WRACKING.

MARK GRUENWALD: STORY
JAMES FRY: PENCILS
KEITH WILLIAMS: INKS
JOE ALBELO: LETTERS
JOE ROSAS: COLORS


SO WHAT'S ON THE LUNCH MENU, JARV?
I THOUGHT I'D TRY THIS NEW RECIPE FOR CREPES, MASTER FABIAN.
UH... CAN YA MAKE MINE WITH PEANUT BUTTER AND BALONEY?
SPINACH WOULD NOT KILL YOU, SIR.
I'M BORROWING THIS BOX OF SALTINES, JARVIS.
UH-OH, I HEAR THE CONSTRUCTION CREW OUT FRONT, MIKE. WE'D BETTER LET THEM IN.
WANT ME TO HELP WITH THE DISHES, EDWIN?
I USED TO HANDLE EVERYTHING AROUND HERE FROM CLEANING TO COOKING TO COMMUNICATIONS. I THINK I CAN STILL MANAGE THE DISHES MYSELF, MS. PEGGY.
PLEASE DROP THE "MS." SOUNDS TOO MUCH LIKE "MISS PIGGY."
CERTAINLY.
YOU DON'T RESENT ALL OF US JOHNNY-COME-LATELIES CAP ADDED TO THE STAFF, DO YOU?
MOST ASSUREDLY NOT, MADAM. I TRULY ENJOY THE CONSTANT COMPANIONSHIP.
WELL, THE MONITORS ARE CALLING. LATER, EDWIN!
EDWIN...EDWIN...EDWIN...
TH-THAT VOICE-- IT SOUNDS LIKE--
I'M BACK, OLD CHAP!
OLD TERRORS DIE HARD, HMM?


WHO ARE YOU?!?
COME, COME, EDWIN. YOU KNOW WHO I AM. YOU KNOW ME AS WELL AS YOU KNOW YOURSELF.
OH, WELL, IF YOU INSIST I SAY IT. I'M THE CRIMSON COWL.
NO! YOU CAN'T BE! THE CRIMSON COWL WAS JUST A DISGUISE FOR THE ROBOTIC ULTRON--HE JUST USED IT ONCE--ABANDONED IT YEARS AGO!
NOW, EDWIN. THAT WASN'T ALL THE CRIMSON COWL WAS, AS YOU VERY WELL KNOW.
THE CRIMSON COWL WAS ALSO THE DISGUISE YOU YOURSELF WORE--WHEN YOU BETRAYED THE AVENGERS!
Y-YES, BUT--ULTRON DUPED ME--!
STAY BACK--I'M--I'M ARMED!
NO, YOU DUPED YOURSELF, LITTLE MAN!
WHEN YOUR MOTHER NEEDED AN OPERATION, YOU WERE TOO PROUD TO ASK THE AVENGERS FOR A SALARY ADVANCE...SO YOU PURPOSELY SOLD THEM OUT TO ULTRON--!
I DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS HIM--YOU! I--
STAY BACK! STAY BACK OR I'LL--
BLAM


BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
ADMIT IT--NGH!--YOU'RE A WORTHLESS TRAITOR--NGH!--WHO SHOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN--NGH!--FORGIVEN!
ADMIT IT!
BLAM
BULLETS MAY BE PROTECTION FROM THUGS AND MUGGERS--
--BUT YOU CAN'T KILL THE TRUTH, CAN YOU?
PULL OFF MY COWL, EDWIN.
YOU KNOW WHO'S FACE YOU'LL SEE.
DO IT, YOU WEAK SPINELESS WORM!
UNMASK ME!


YES, IT'S YOUR FACE BENEATH THE MASK.
I AM YOUR GUILTIEST SECRET... YOUR GREATEST FEAR.
YOU'VE WANTED TO KILL ME FOR YEARS, HAVEN'T YOU? THAT PART OF YOU WILLING TO SELL OUT YOUR FRIENDS FOR A FEW PIECES OF SILVER.
BUT YOU CAN'T. I WILL BE WITH YOU FOR AS LONG AS YOU LIVE!
AND TRY AS YOU MIGHT, YOU'LL NEVER KNOW WHEN THE NEED TO BETRAY ALL THOSE WHO TRUST YOU WILL ARISE AGAIN, DOMINATE YOU ALL OVER AGAIN!
TRY TO KILL ME ALL YOU WANT, EDWIN, IT'S NO USE. TO KILL ME, YOU'D HAVE TO KILL YOURSELF...
...WHICH, COME TO THINK OF IT, MAY NOT BE SUCH A BAD I--
SHUT UP.
BLAM!
I KILLED IT. IT'S GONE. BLOWN TO BITS. WHERE ARE THE BITS?
JARVIS! I HEARD GUNFIRE DOWN HERE! WHAT HAPPENED? WHAT'S WRONG?
I...THERE WAS A RAT DOWN HERE.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT CAME OVER ME, MICHAEL.
I STARTED SHOOTING AT IT... AND SHOOTING... AND SHOOTING...
NEXT: THE MYSTERY DEEPENS...

MARVEL COMICS
THE CROSSING LINE PART 2 OF SIX
AVENGERS
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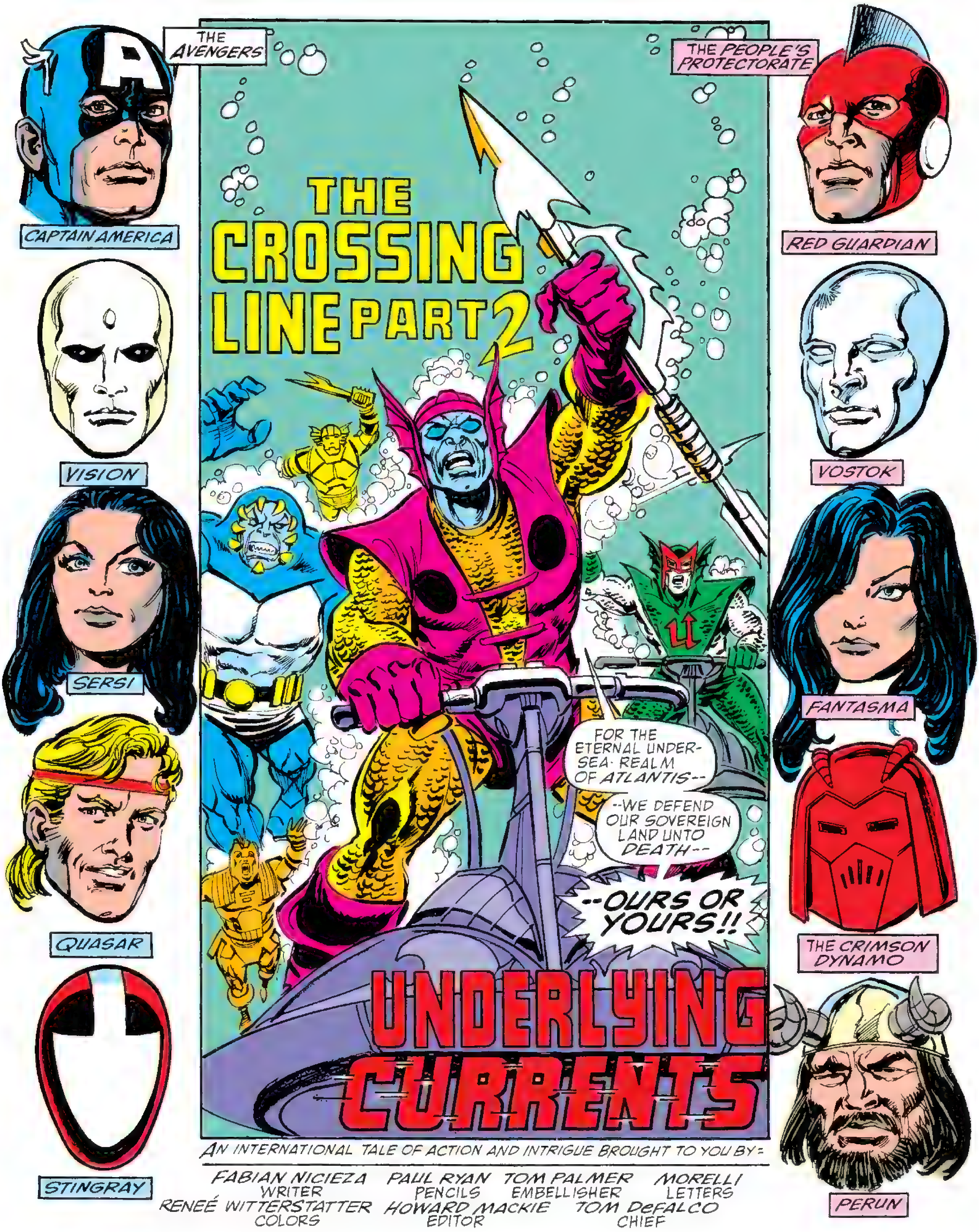
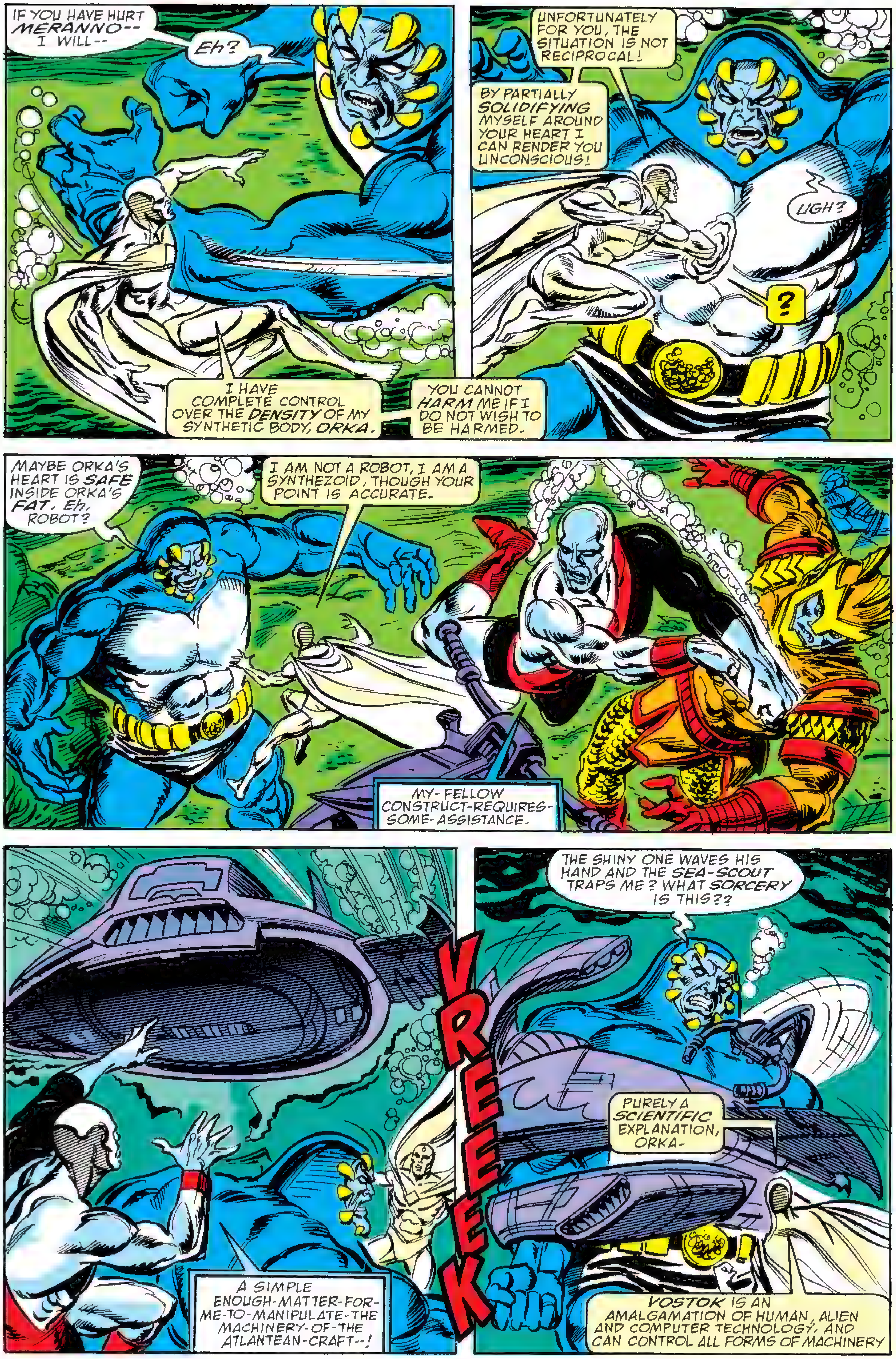
$1.25 CAN
320
EARLY AUG
02458
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
RYAN / PALMER
VENGEANCE!

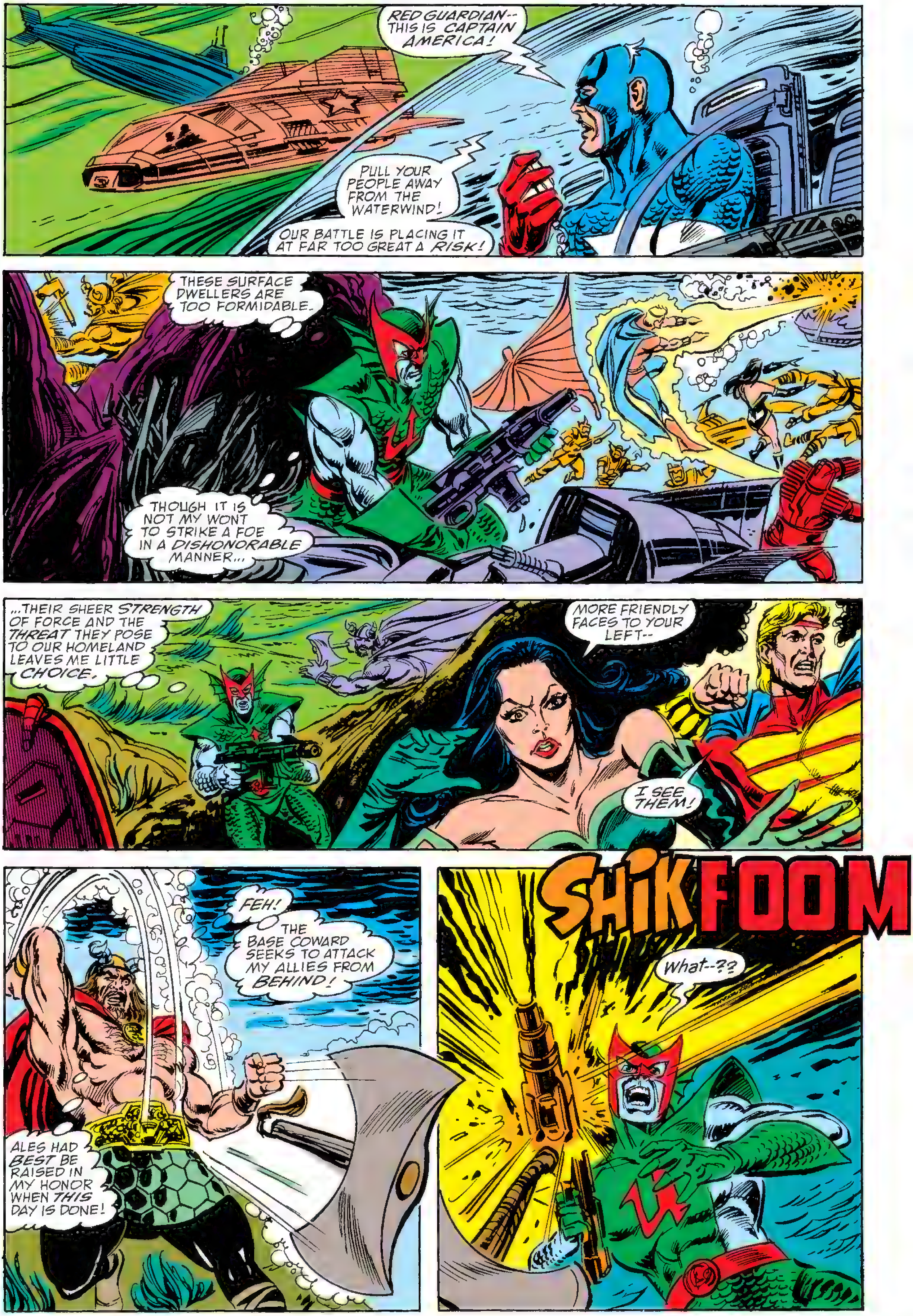
TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND! STAN LEE PRESENTS . . . THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!


THE AVENGERS
CAPTAIN AMERICA
VISION
SERSI
QUASAR
STINGRAY
THE PEOPLE'S PROTECTORATE
RED GUARDIAN
VOSTOK
FANTASMA
THE CRIMSON DYNAMO
PERUN
THE CROSSING LINE PART 2
FOR THE ETERNAL UNDER-SEA REALM OF ATLANTIS--
--WE DEFEND OUR SOVEREIGN LAND UNTO DEATH--
--OURS OR YOURS!!
UNDERLYING CURRENTS
AN INTERNATIONAL TALE OF ACTION AND INTRIGUE BROUGHT TO YOU BY:
FABIAN NICIEZA WRITER
PAUL RYAN PENCILS
TOM PALMER EMBELLISHER
MORELLI LETTERS
RENEÉ WITTERSTATTER COLORS
HOWARD MACKIE EDITOR
TOM DeFALCO CHIEF

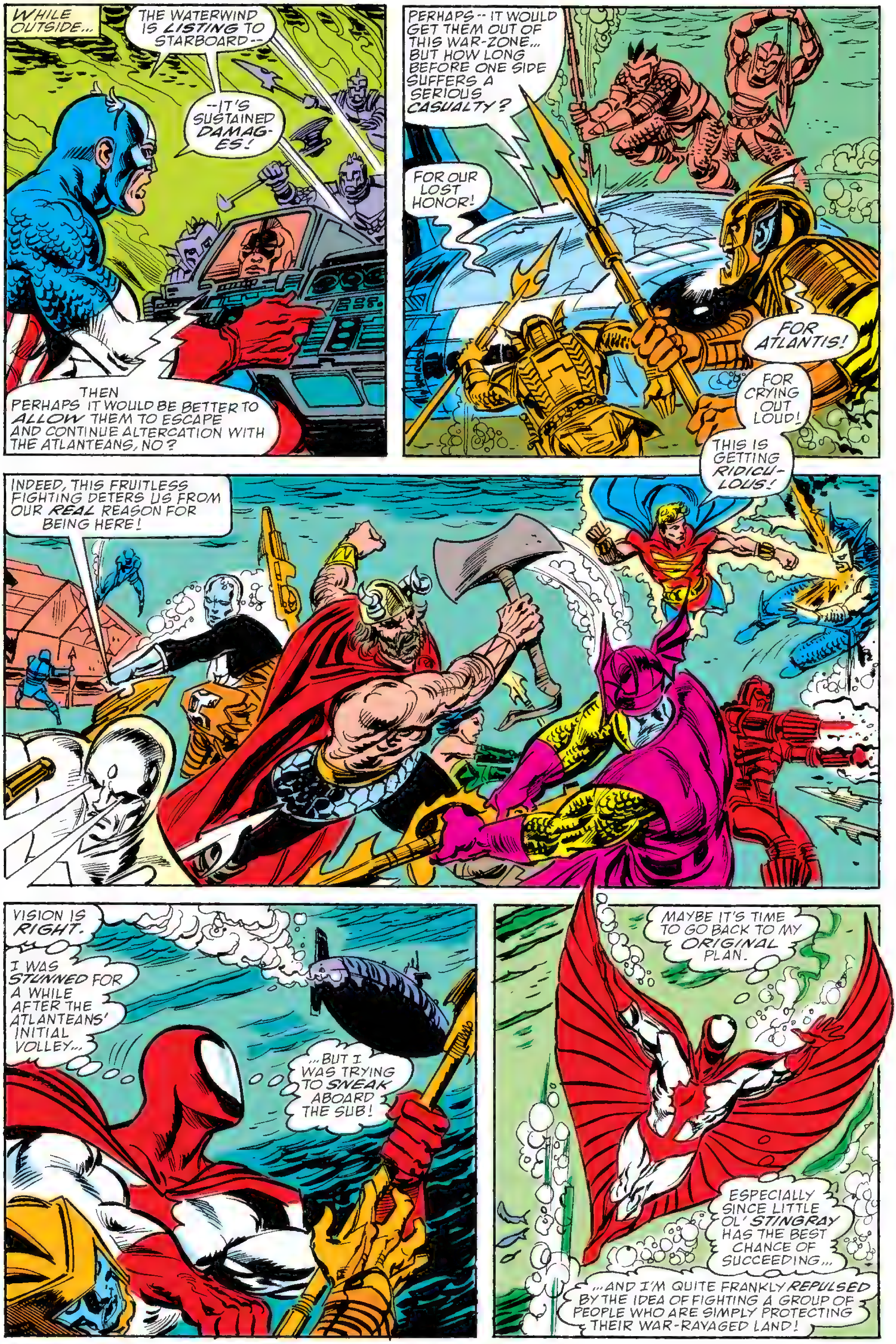
Uhm... COMRADES--?
NOW WE'RE COMRADES, DYNAMO?
A SECOND AGO WE WERE FIGHTING OVER A STOLEN SUBMARINE!
QUASAR, IT WOULD APPEAR WE HAVE TO PUT ASIDE OUR DIFFERENCES FOR THE MOMENT.
IT WOULD BE IN OUR BEST INTEREST TO PREVENT THE ATLANTEAN ARMY FROM ATTACKING THE WATERWIND VESSEL AS EXPEDIENTLY AS POSSIBLE!
THAT WOULD-BE-THE-MOST-JUDICIOUS-COURSE-OF-ACTION--VISION.
WELL THEN, SINCE I AM RAPIDLY RUNNING OUT OF BREATH--
--LET THE MERRIMENT COMMENCE!
BRUBLUM
ALWAYS THE FIRST TO BATTLE, PERUN?
OCCASIONALLY, MIGHT WE NOT PREFER CONVERSATION TO DEVASTATION?
FWOOM
ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING THESE BEINGS MAY BE JUSTIFIED IN DEFENDING THEIR LAND?
KRUMBBL

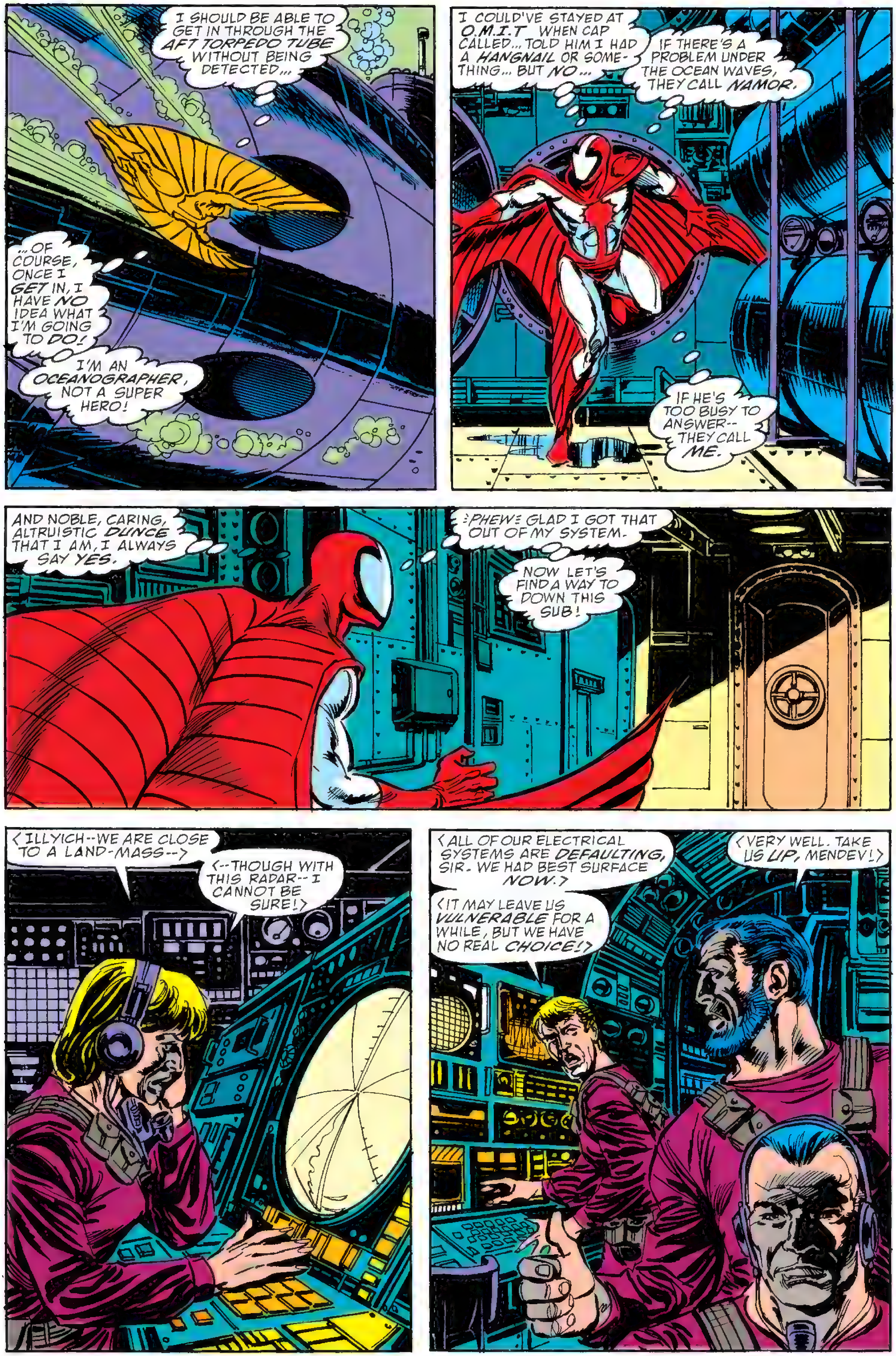

IF YOU HAVE HURT MERANNO-- I WILL--
Eh?
I HAVE COMPLETE CONTROL OVER THE DENSITY OF MY SYNTHETIC BODY, ORKA.
YOU CANNOT HARM ME IF I DO NOT WISH TO BE HARMED.
UNFORTUNATELY FOR YOU, THE SITUATION IS NOT RECIPROCAL!
BY PARTIALLY SOLIDIFYING MYSELF AROUND YOUR HEART I CAN RENDER YOU UNCONSCIOUS!
UGH?
?
MAYBE ORKA'S HEART IS SAFE INSIDE ORKA'S FAT. Eh, ROBOT?
I AM NOT A ROBOT, I AM A SYNTHEZOID, THOUGH YOUR POINT IS ACCURATE.
MY-FELLOW CONSTRUCT-REQUIRES-SOME-ASSISTANCE.
A SIMPLE ENOUGH-MATTER-FOR-ME-TO-MANIPULATE-THE MACHINERY-OF-THE ATLANTEAN-CRAFT--!
VREEEK
THE SHINY ONE WAVES HIS HAND AND THE SEA-SCOUT TRAPS ME? WHAT SORCERY IS THIS??
PURELY A SCIENTIFIC EXPLANATION, ORKA-
VOSTOK IS AN AMALGAMATION OF HUMAN, ALIEN AND COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY, AND CAN CONTROL ALL FORMS OF MACHINERY

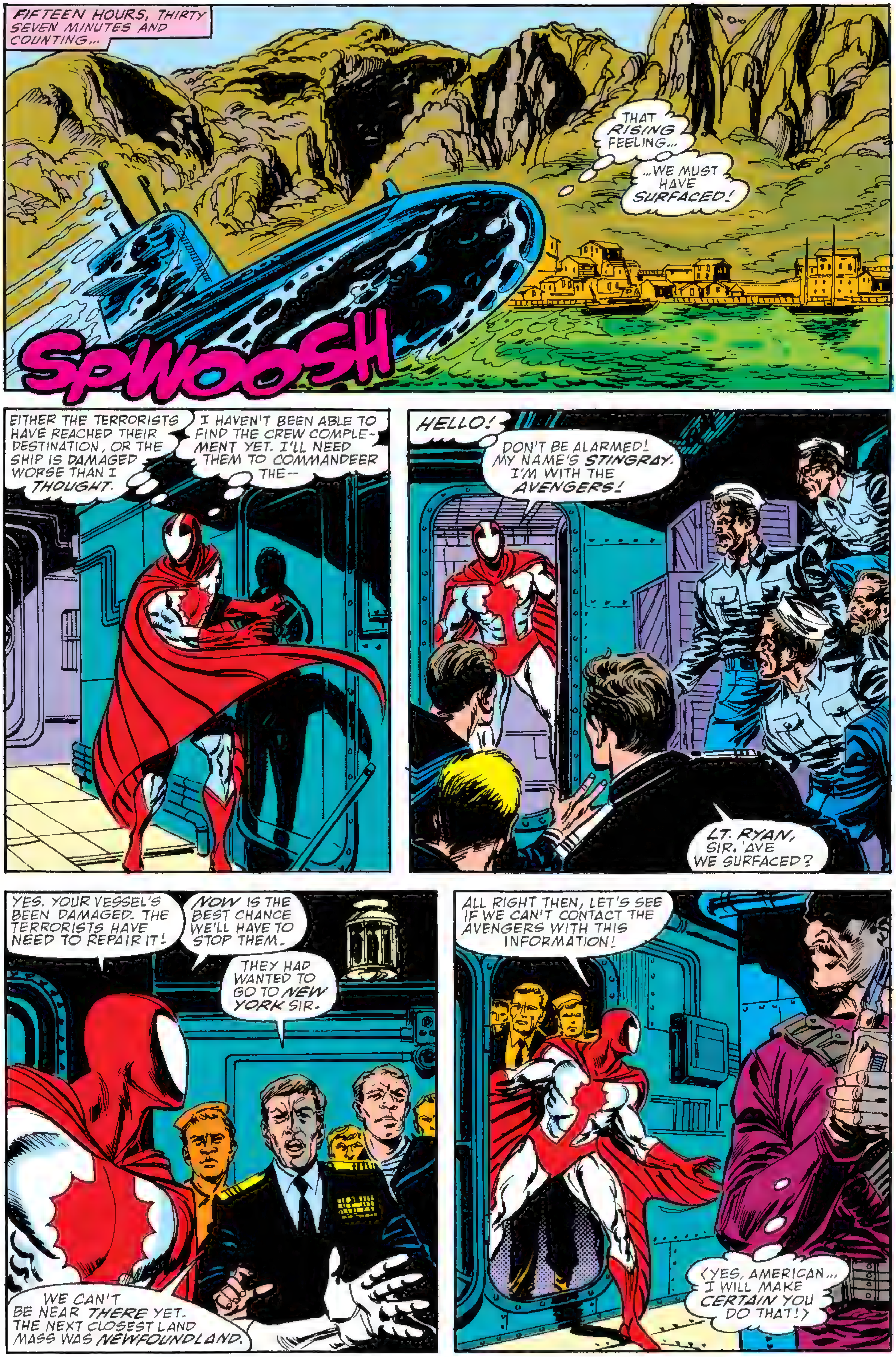
NOW THAT HE HAS WIELDED *HIS* POWERS TO USEFUL EFFECT--
--ALLOW *ME* TO RESPOND IN KIND!
WHAT? YOU ARE FLYING *IN* ME?!
GET OUT!
AARRGH!!
AS I SUSPECTED.
MY ARM WAS NOT LONG ENOUGH TO REACH HIS HEART, BUT MY ENTIRE BODY *WAS*.
IT WOULD SEEM, VOSTOK, THAT THE AVENGERS AND THE PEOPLE'S PROTECTORATE FUNCTION MORE EFFICIENTLY AS *ALLIES* THAN OPPONENTS!
THEN-LET-US-WORK-TOGETHER-TO-DETER-THE-ATLANTEANS--
--AND-APPREHEND-THE-*WATERWIND*.
OH, IT IS *SO* PLEASANT TO SEE YOU BOYS KISSING AND MAKING UP!
ALLOW MY POWERS OF *MATTER TRANSMUTATION* TO CONTINUE THIS LOVING FEELING!
OUR RIFLE BLASTERS ARE FIRING--
--FLOWERS?

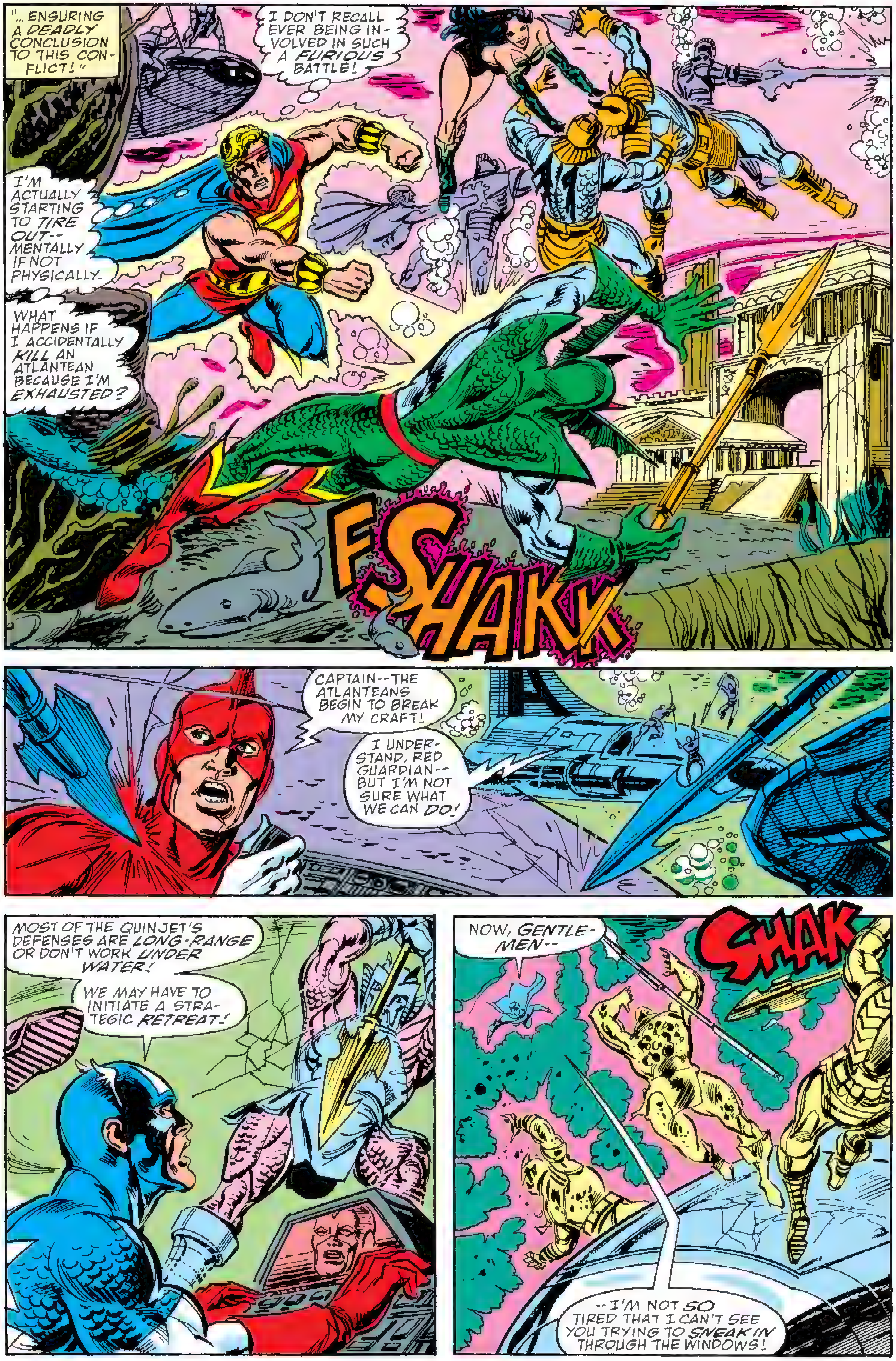

RED GUARDIAN-- THIS IS CAPTAIN AMERICA!
PULL YOUR PEOPLE AWAY FROM THE WATERWIND!
OUR BATTLE IS PLACING IT AT FAR TOO GREAT A RISK!
THESE SURFACE DWELLERS ARE TOO FORMIDABLE.
THOUGH IT IS NOT MY WONT TO STRIKE A FOE IN A DISHONORABLE MANNER...
...THEIR SHEER STRENGTH OF FORCE AND THE THREAT THEY POSE TO OUR HOMELAND LEAVES ME LITTLE CHOICE.
MORE FRIENDLY FACES TO YOUR LEFT--
I SEE THEM!
FEH!
THE BASE COWARD SEEKS TO ATTACK MY ALLIES FROM BEHIND!
ALES HAD BEST BE RAISED IN MY HONOR WHEN THIS DAY IS DONE!
SHIK FOOM
What--??

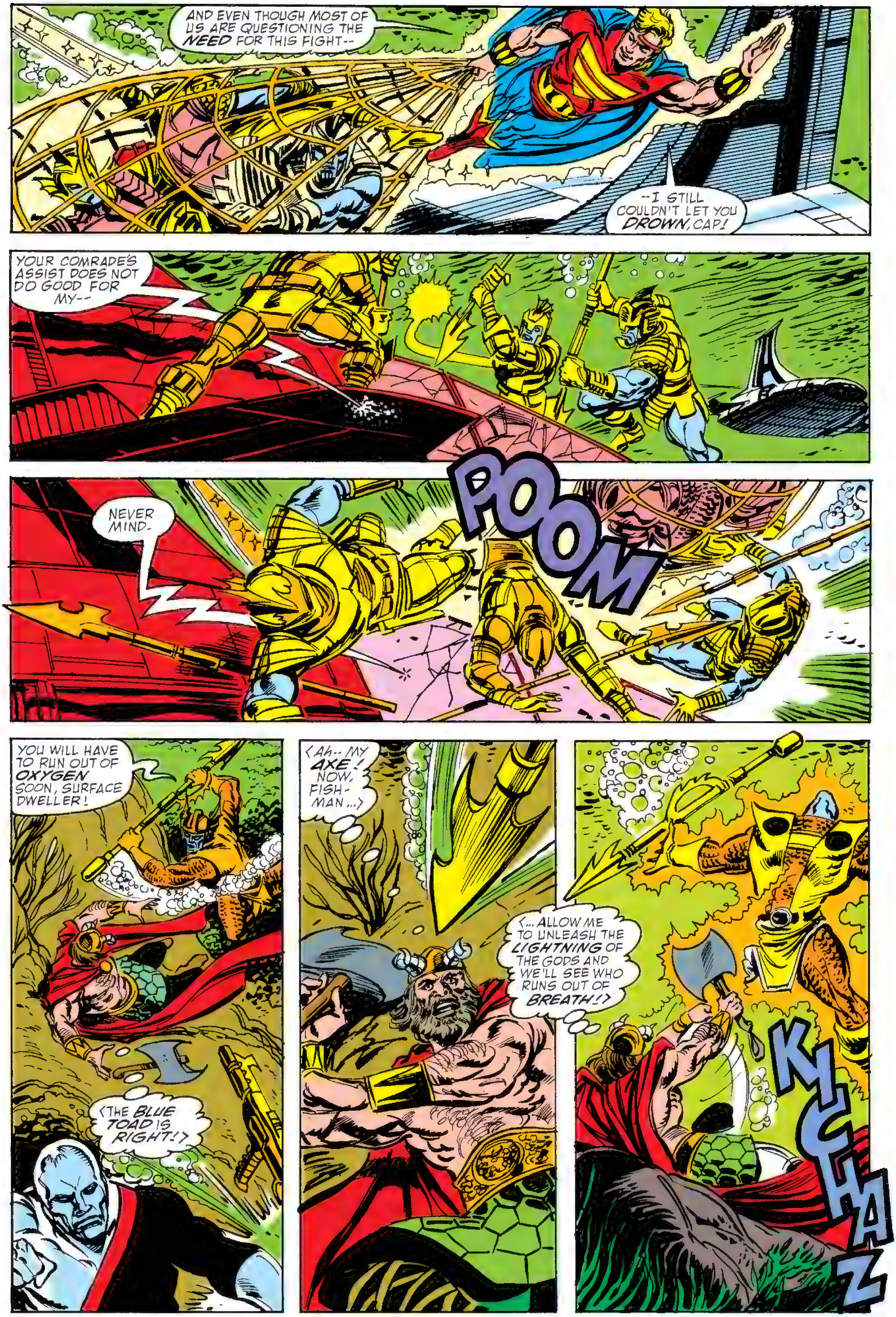
TOOM
INSIDE THE WATERWIND THE SOVIET TERRORISTS WHO CALL THEMSELVES THE PEACE CORPSE, REEL FROM THE MIS-FIRED CONCUSSION BLAST---
... FIFTEEN HOURS, THIRTY SEVEN MINUTES AND COUNTING.
‹VOROSHILOV --DAMAGE REPORT!›
‹I'M STILL TRYING TO UNDERSTAND THE MONITORS, ILLYICH!›
‹I'M HERE BECAUSE OF MY KNOWLEDGE ON INTERNATIONAL POLITICS, REMEMBER??›
‹I HAVE IT--NO CORE DAMAGE--REACTOR IS STABLE.›
‹I RECOMMEND WE EVACUATE THE AREA AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.›
‹NO, MENDEV!›
‹WE DO NOT FLEE! WE ARE SOLDIERS!›
AN' THEY'RE BLOODY SUPER-HUMANS AND CRAZY FISH-MEN, ROIT?
‹ALLANSON IS RIGHT, STROKOV!›
‹WE WILL ACCOMPLISH NOTHING BY ENGAGING THESE SO-CALLED HEROES.›
‹THE RADAR INDICATES THE FIGHTING IS MOVING AWAY FROM US!›
‹WE HAVE SOME MAJOR SYSTEMS FAULTS, COL-GENERAL!›
‹WE NEED TIME TO BERTH AND EFFECT REPAIRS!›
‹MENDEV-- PLOT A COURSE FOR THE NEAREST COASTAL REGION!›
‹OUR ONLY HOPE OF SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENTING OUR PLAN LIES IN OUR ABILITY TO EFFECTIVELY THREATEN THE UNITED STATES!›
‹... AND WE CANNOT DO THAT IN A DAMAGED VESSEL!›

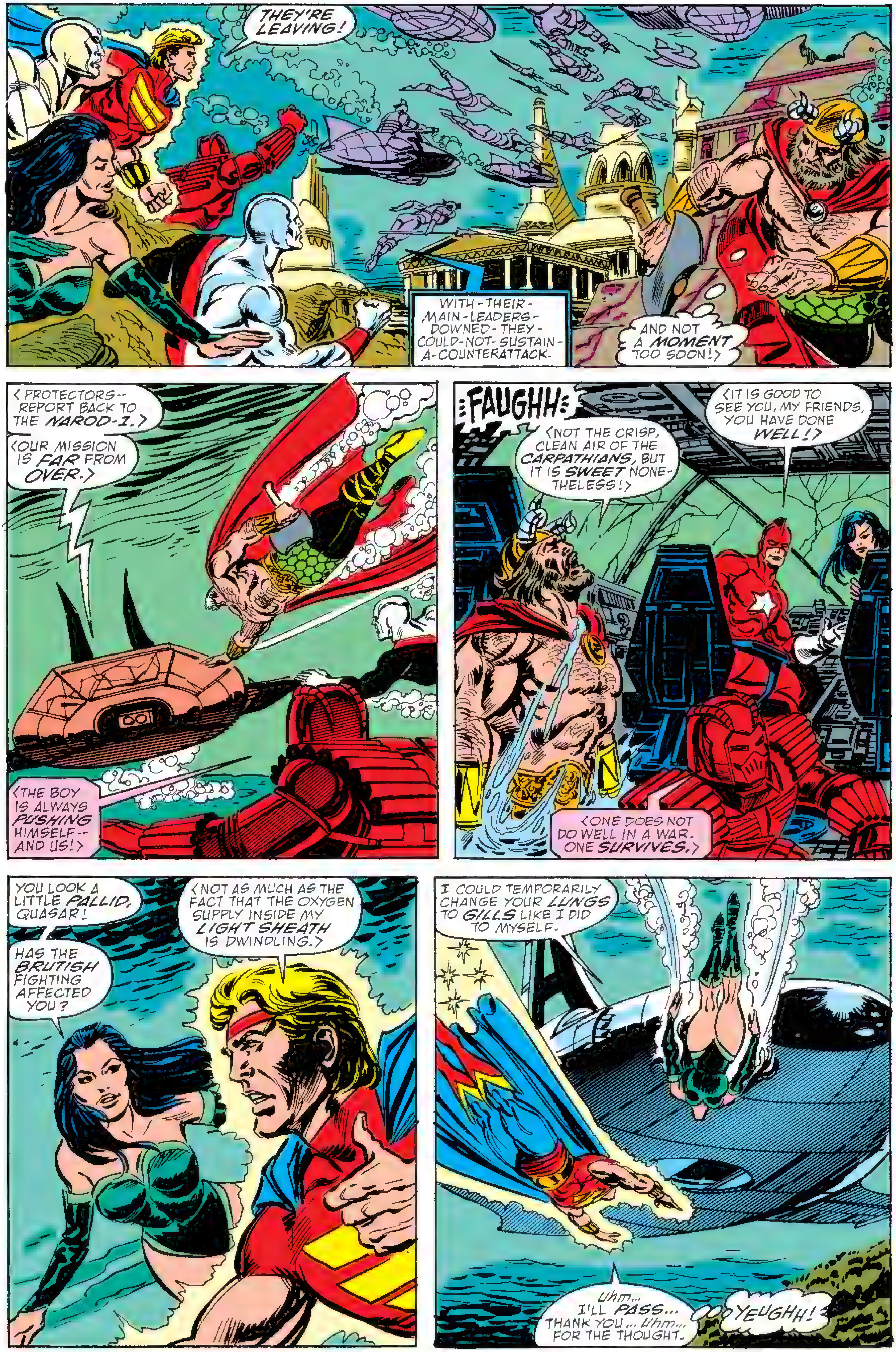

WHILE OUTSIDE...
THE WATERWIND IS LISTING TO STARBOARD--
--IT'S SUSTAINED DAMAGES!
THEN PERHAPS IT WOULD BE BETTER TO ALLOW THEM TO ESCAPE AND CONTINUE ALTERCATION WITH THE ATLANTEANS, NO?
PERHAPS-- IT WOULD GET THEM OUT OF THIS WAR-ZONE... BUT HOW LONG BEFORE ONE SIDE SUFFERS A SERIOUS CASUALTY?
FOR OUR LOST HONOR!
FOR ATLANTIS!
FOR CRYING OUT LOUD!
THIS IS GETTING RIDICULOUS!
INDEED, THIS FRUITLESS FIGHTING DETERS US FROM OUR REAL REASON FOR BEING HERE!
VISION IS RIGHT.
I WAS STUNNED FOR A WHILE AFTER THE ATLANTEANS' INITIAL VOLLEY...
...BUT I WAS TRYING TO SNEAK ABOARD THE SUB!
MAYBE IT'S TIME TO GO BACK TO MY ORIGINAL PLAN.
ESPECIALLY SINCE LITTLE OL' STINGRAY HAS THE BEST CHANCE OF SUCCEEDING...
...AND I'M QUITE FRANKLY REPULSED BY THE IDEA OF FIGHTING A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO ARE SIMPLY PROTECTING THEIR WAR-RAVAGED LAND!

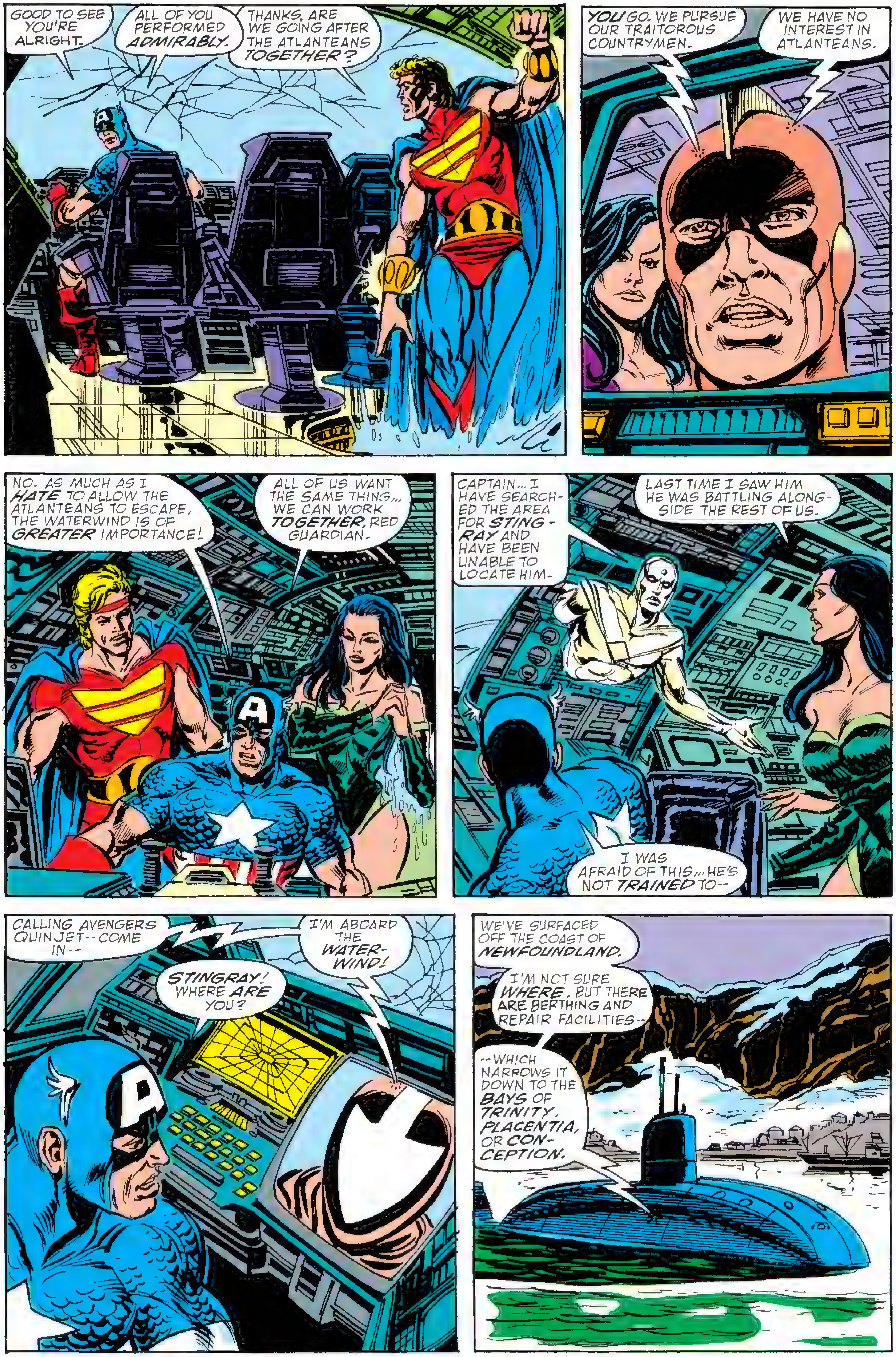

I SHOULD BE ABLE TO GET IN THROUGH THE *AFT TORPEDO TUBE* WITHOUT BEING DETECTED...
...OF COURSE, ONCE I *GET* IN, I HAVE *NO* IDEA WHAT I'M GOING TO *DO!*
I'M AN *OCEANOGRAPHER,* NOT A SUPER HERO!
I COULD'VE STAYED AT *O.M.I.T.* WHEN CAP CALLED... TOLD HIM I HAD A *HANGNAIL* OR SOMETHING... BUT *NO*...
IF THERE'S A PROBLEM UNDER THE OCEAN WAVES, THEY CALL *NAMOR.*
IF HE'S TOO BUSY TO ANSWER-- THEY CALL *ME.*
AND NOBLE, CARING, ALTRUISTIC *DUNCE* THAT I AM, I ALWAYS SAY *YES.*
PHEW! GLAD I GOT THAT OUT OF MY SYSTEM.
NOW LET'S FIND A WAY TO DOWN THIS SUB!
<ILLYICH--WE ARE CLOSE TO A LAND-MASS-->
<--THOUGH WITH THIS RADAR-- I CANNOT BE SURE!>
<ALL OF OUR ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS ARE *DEFAULTING,* SIR. WE HAD BEST SURFACE *NOW.*>
<IT MAY LEAVE US *VULNERABLE* FOR A WHILE, BUT WE HAVE NO REAL *CHOICE!*>
<VERY WELL. TAKE US *UP,* MENDEV!>

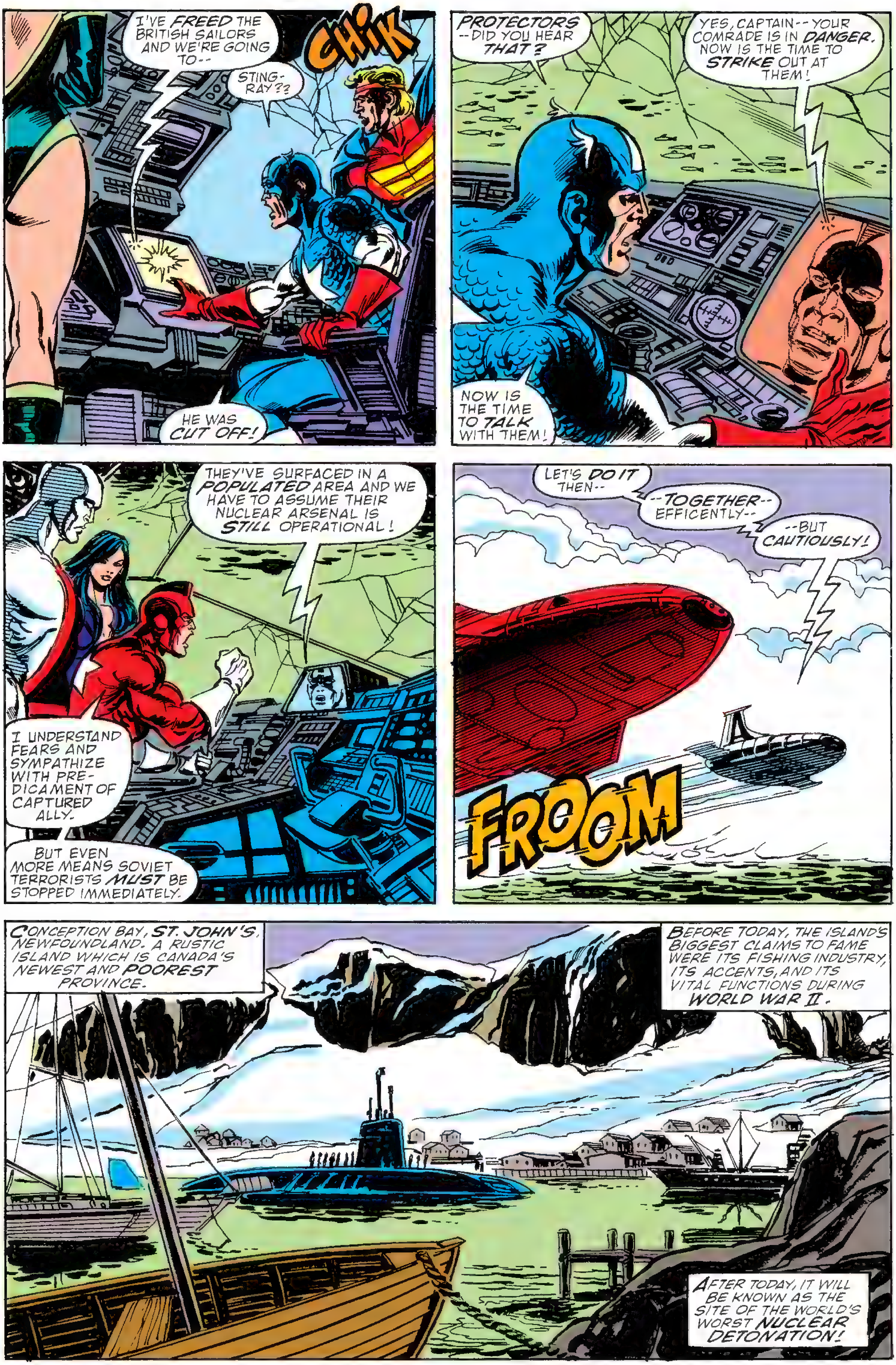

FIFTEEN HOURS, THIRTY SEVEN MINUTES AND COUNTING...
THAT RISING FEELING...
...WE MUST HAVE SURFACED!
SPWOOSH
EITHER THE TERRORISTS HAVE REACHED THEIR DESTINATION, OR THE SHIP IS DAMAGED WORSE THAN I THOUGHT.
I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO FIND THE CREW COMPLEMENT YET. I'LL NEED THEM TO COMMANDEER THE--
HELLO!
DON'T BE ALARMED! MY NAME'S STINGRAY. I'M WITH THE AVENGERS!
LT. RYAN, SIR. 'AVE WE SURFACED?
YES. YOUR VESSEL'S BEEN DAMAGED. THE TERRORISTS HAVE NEED TO REPAIR IT!
NOW IS THE BEST CHANCE WE'LL HAVE TO STOP THEM.
THEY HAD WANTED TO GO TO NEW YORK SIR.
WE CAN'T BE NEAR THERE YET. THE NEXT CLOSEST LAND MASS WAS NEWFOUNDLAND.
ALL RIGHT THEN, LET'S SEE IF WE CAN'T CONTACT THE AVENGERS WITH THIS INFORMATION!
‹YES, AMERICAN... I WILL MAKE CERTAIN YOU DO THAT!›

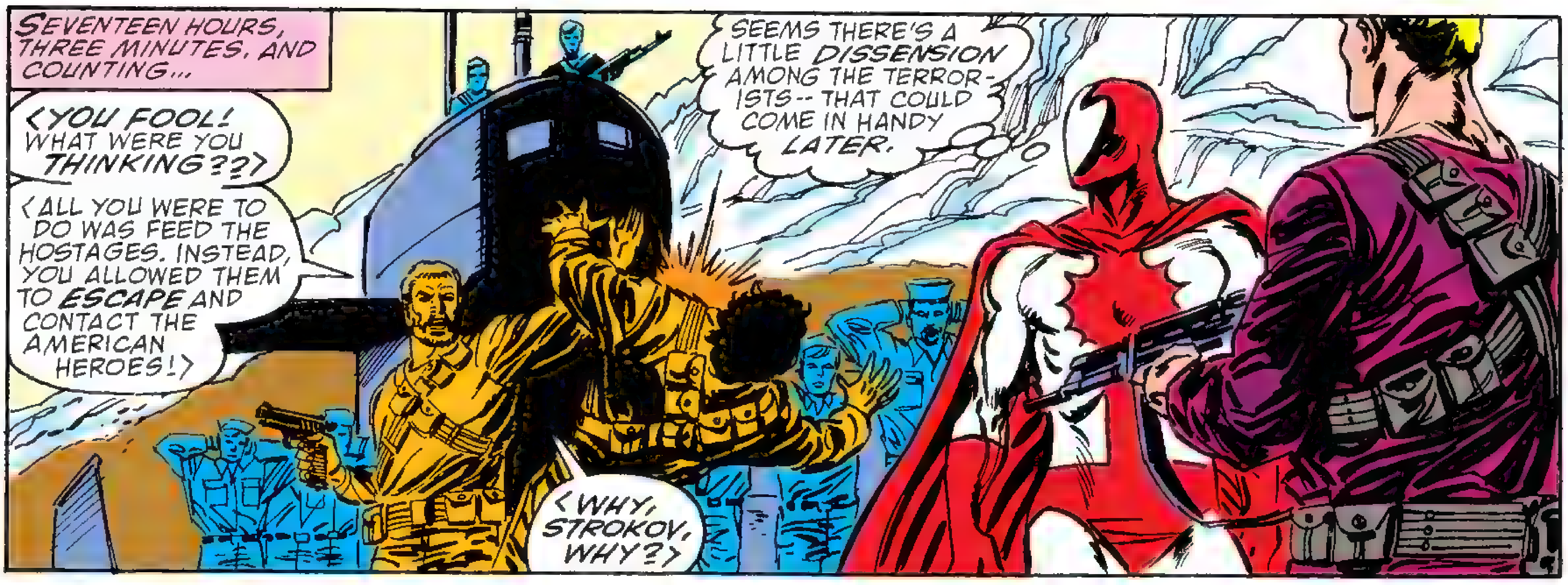

"... ENSURING A *DEADLY* CONCLUSION TO THIS CONFLICT!"
I DON'T RECALL EVER BEING INVOLVED IN SUCH A *FURIOUS* BATTLE!
I'M ACTUALLY STARTING TO *TIRE OUT*-- MENTALLY IF NOT PHYSICALLY.
WHAT HAPPENS IF I ACCIDENTALLY *KILL* AN ATLANTEAN BECAUSE I'M *EXHAUSTED?*
F-SHAKK
CAPTAIN--THE ATLANTEANS BEGIN TO BREAK MY CRAFT!
I UNDERSTAND, RED GUARDIAN--BUT I'M NOT SURE WHAT WE CAN *DO!*
MOST OF THE QUINJET'S DEFENSES ARE *LONG-RANGE* OR DON'T WORK *UNDER WATER!*
WE MAY HAVE TO INITIATE A STRATEGIC *RETREAT!*
NOW, *GENTLEMEN*--
SHAK
--I'M NOT *SO* TIRED THAT I CAN'T SEE YOU TRYING TO *SNEAK IN* THROUGH THE WINDOWS!

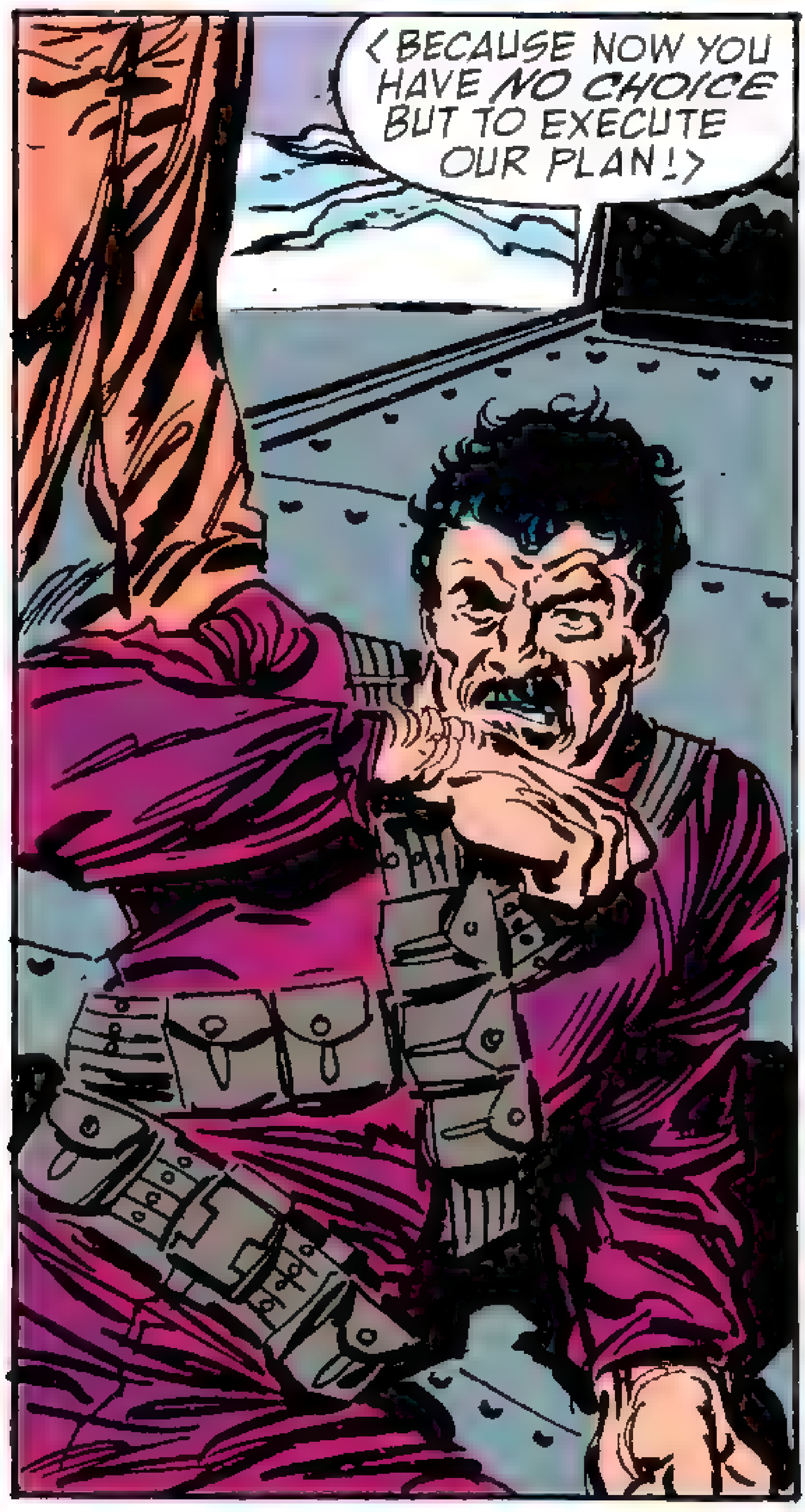

AND EVEN THOUGH MOST OF US ARE QUESTIONING THE NEED FOR THIS FIGHT--
--I STILL COULDN'T LET YOU DROWN, CAP!
YOUR COMRADE'S ASSIST DOES NOT DO GOOD FOR MY--
NEVER MIND.
POOOM
YOU WILL HAVE TO RUN OUT OF OXYGEN SOON, SURFACE DWELLER!
‹THE BLUE TOAD IS RIGHT!›
‹Ah-- MY AXE! NOW, FISH-MAN ...›
‹... ALLOW ME TO UNLEASH THE LIGHTNING OF THE GODS AND WE'LL SEE WHO RUNS OUT OF BREATH!›
KNCHAZ

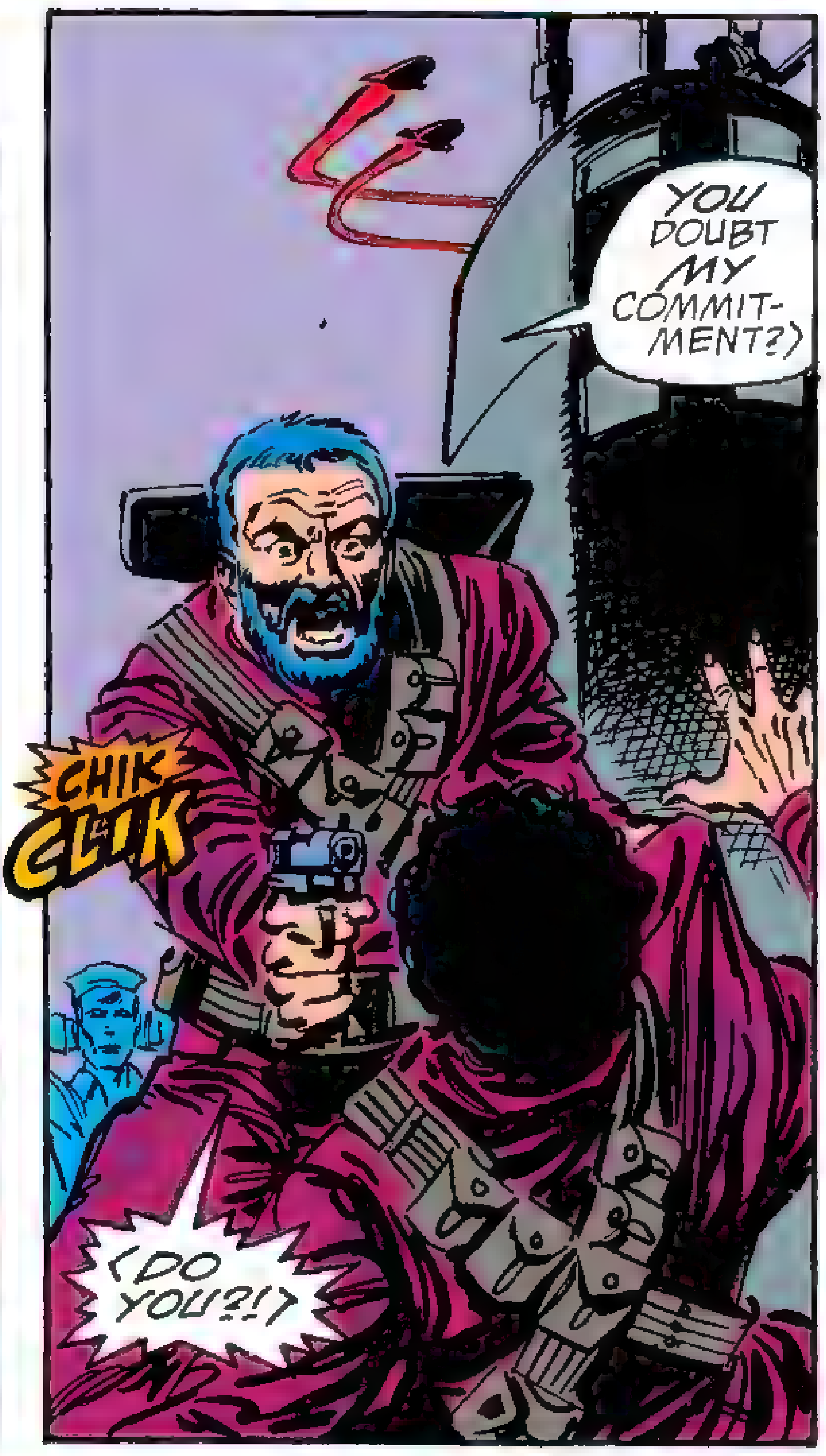

THEY'RE LEAVING!
WITH-THEIR-MAIN-LEADERS-DOWNED-THEY-COULD-NOT-SUSTAIN-A-COUNTERATTACK-
AND NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON!>
<PROTECTORS-- REPORT BACK TO THE NAROD-1.>
<OUR MISSION IS FAR FROM OVER.>
<THE BOY IS ALWAYS PUSHING HIMSELF-- AND US!>
FAUGHH!
<NOT THE CRISP, CLEAN AIR OF THE CARPATHIANS, BUT IT IS SWEET NONETHELESS!>
<IT IS GOOD TO SEE YOU, MY FRIENDS. YOU HAVE DONE WELL!>
<ONE DOES NOT DO WELL IN A WAR. ONE SURVIVES.>
YOU LOOK A LITTLE PALLID, QUASAR!
HAS THE BRUTISH FIGHTING AFFECTED YOU?
<NOT AS MUCH AS THE FACT THAT THE OXYGEN SUPPLY INSIDE MY LIGHT SHEATH IS DWINDLING.>
I COULD TEMPORARILY CHANGE YOUR LUNGS TO GILLS LIKE I DID TO MYSELF.
Uhm... I'LL PASS... THANK YOU... Uhm... FOR THE THOUGHT.
YEUGHH!

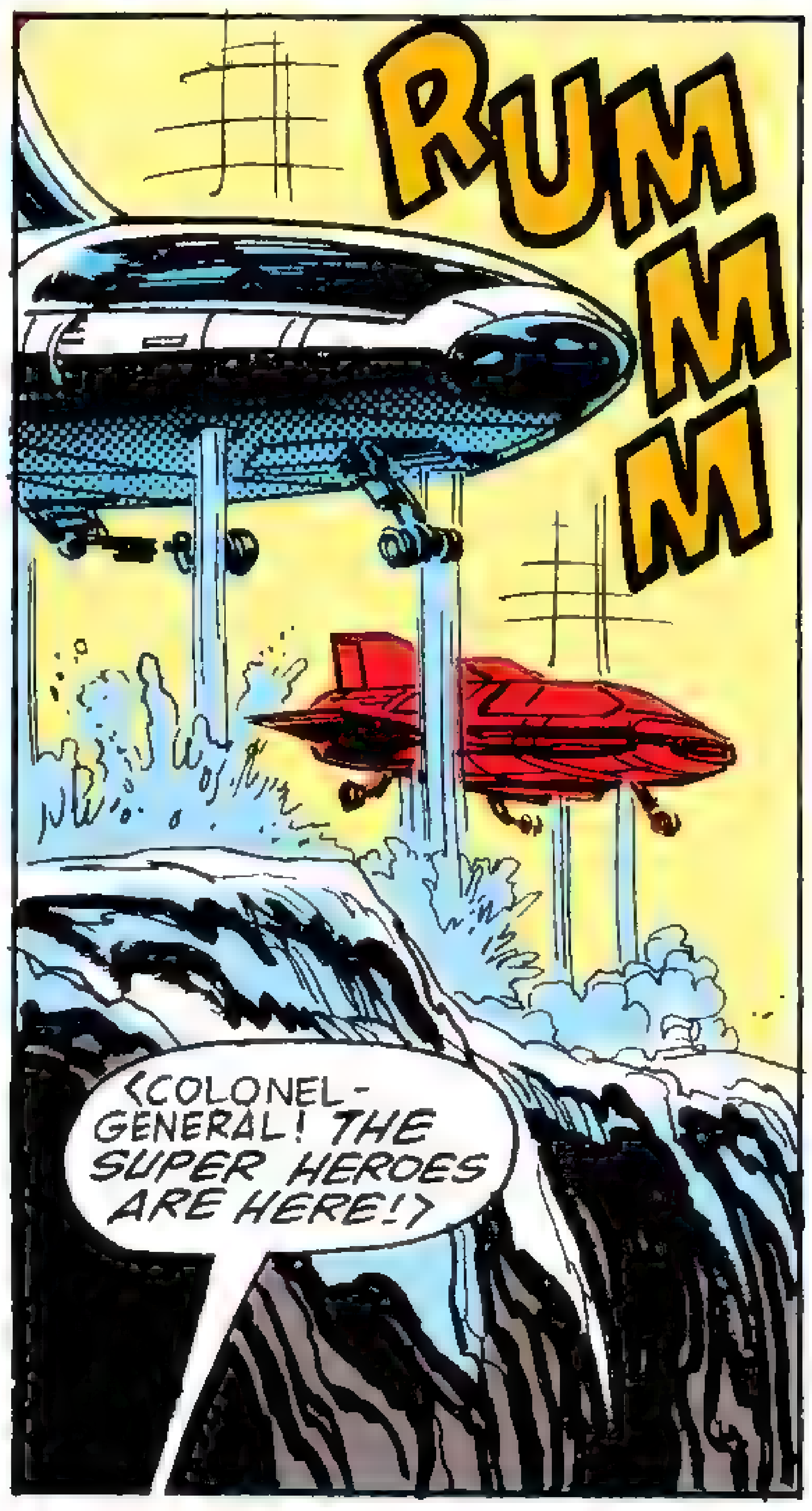

GOOD TO SEE YOU'RE ALRIGHT.
ALL OF YOU PERFORMED *ADMIRABLY.*
THANKS. ARE WE GOING AFTER THE ATLANTEANS *TOGETHER?*
YOU GO. WE PURSUE OUR TRAITOROUS COUNTRYMEN.
WE HAVE NO INTEREST IN ATLANTEANS.
NO. AS MUCH AS I *HATE* TO ALLOW THE ATLANTEANS TO ESCAPE, THE WATERWIND IS OF *GREATER* IMPORTANCE!
ALL OF US WANT THE SAME THING... WE CAN WORK *TOGETHER*, RED GUARDIAN.
CAPTAIN... I HAVE SEARCHED THE AREA FOR *STINGRAY* AND HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO LOCATE HIM.
LAST TIME I SAW HIM HE WAS BATTLING ALONGSIDE THE REST OF US.
I WAS AFRAID OF THIS... HE'S NOT *TRAINED* TO--
CALLING AVENGERS QUINJET-- COME IN--
I'M ABOARD THE *WATERWIND!*
STINGRAY! WHERE *ARE* YOU?
WE'VE SURFACED OFF THE COAST OF *NEWFOUNDLAND.*
I'M NOT SURE *WHERE*, BUT THERE ARE BERTHING AND REPAIR FACILITIES--
--WHICH NARROWS IT DOWN TO THE *BAYS OF TRINITY, PLACENTIA,* OR *CONCEPTION.*

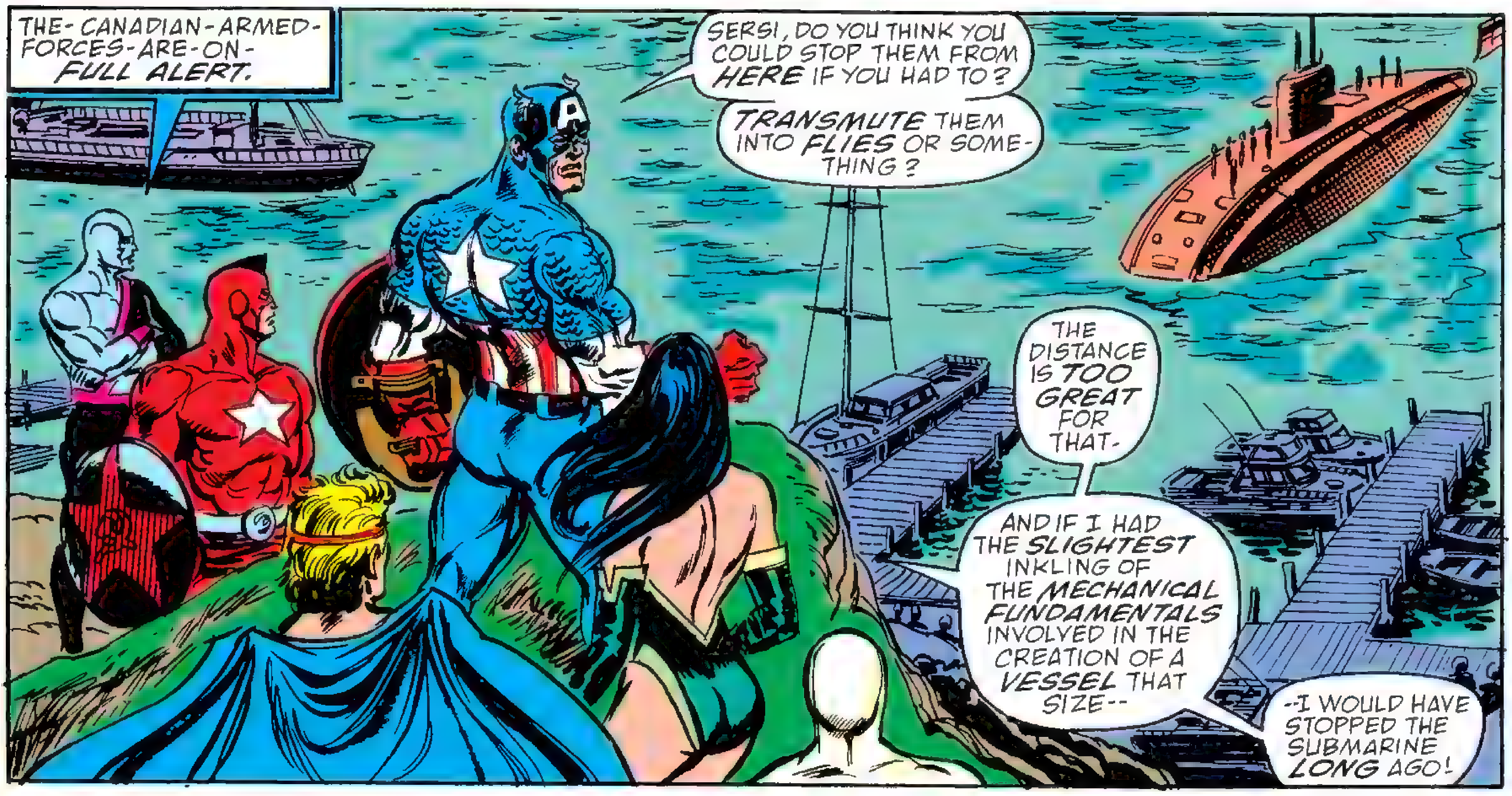

I'VE FREED THE BRITISH SAILORS AND WE'RE GOING TO--
CHIK
STING-RAY??
HE WAS CUT OFF!
PROTECTORS --DID YOU HEAR THAT?
YES, CAPTAIN--YOUR COMRADE IS IN DANGER. NOW IS THE TIME TO STRIKE OUT AT THEM!
NOW IS THE TIME TO TALK WITH THEM!
THEY'VE SURFACED IN A POPULATED AREA AND WE HAVE TO ASSUME THEIR NUCLEAR ARSENAL IS STILL OPERATIONAL!
I UNDERSTAND FEARS AND SYMPATHIZE WITH PRE-DICAMENT OF CAPTURED ALLY.
BUT EVEN MORE MEANS SOVIET TERRORISTS MUST BE STOPPED IMMEDIATELY.
LET'S DO IT THEN--
--TOGETHER--EFFICENTLY--
--BUT CAUTIOUSLY!
FROOM
CONCEPTION BAY, ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND. A RUSTIC ISLAND WHICH IS CANADA'S NEWEST AND POOREST PROVINCE.
BEFORE TODAY, THE ISLAND'S BIGGEST CLAIMS TO FAME WERE ITS FISHING INDUSTRY, ITS ACCENTS, AND ITS VITAL FUNCTIONS DURING WORLD WAR II.
AFTER TODAY, IT WILL BE KNOWN AS THE SITE OF THE WORLD'S WORST NUCLEAR DETONATION!

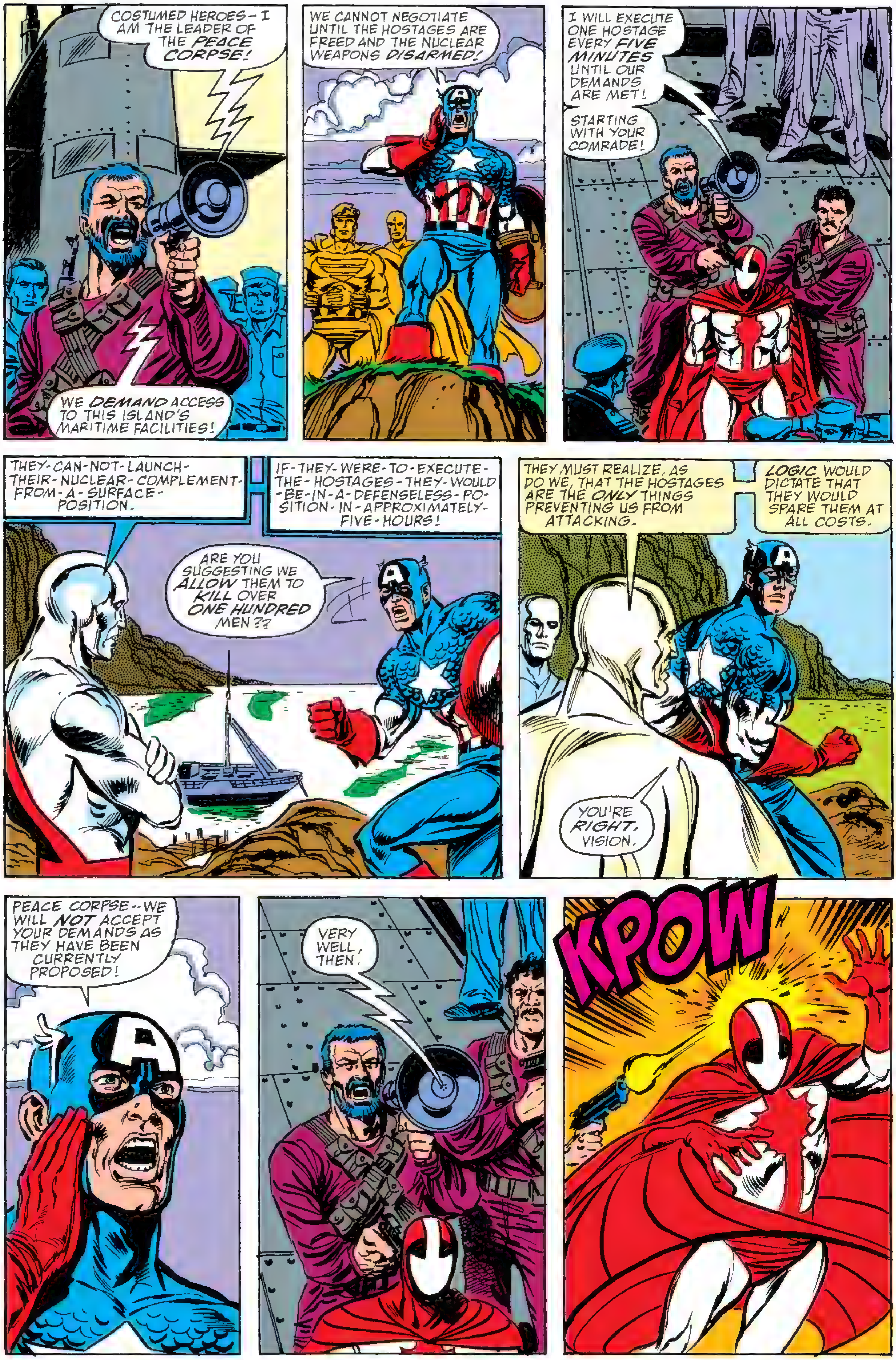

SEVENTEEN HOURS, THREE MINUTES, AND COUNTING...
<YOU FOOL! WHAT WERE YOU THINKING??>
<ALL YOU WERE TO DO WAS FEED THE HOSTAGES. INSTEAD, YOU ALLOWED THEM TO ESCAPE AND CONTACT THE AMERICAN HEROES!>
<WHY, STROKOV, WHY?>
SEEMS THERE'S A LITTLE DISSENSION AMONG THE TERRORISTS-- THAT COULD COME IN HANDY LATER.


<BECAUSE NOW YOU HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO EXECUTE OUR PLAN!>

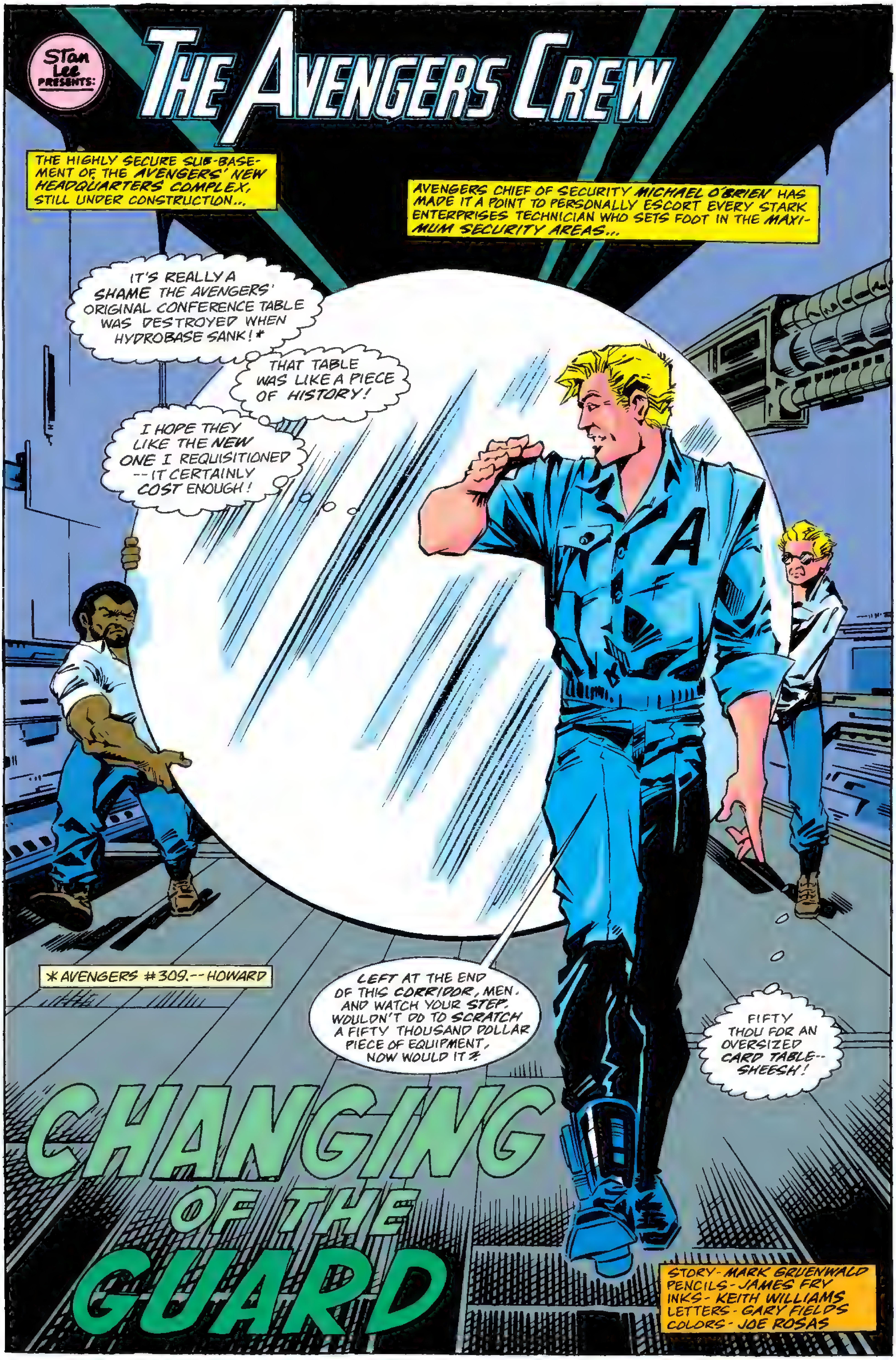

YOU DOUBT MY COMMITMENT?>
CHIK CLIK
<DO YOU?!>

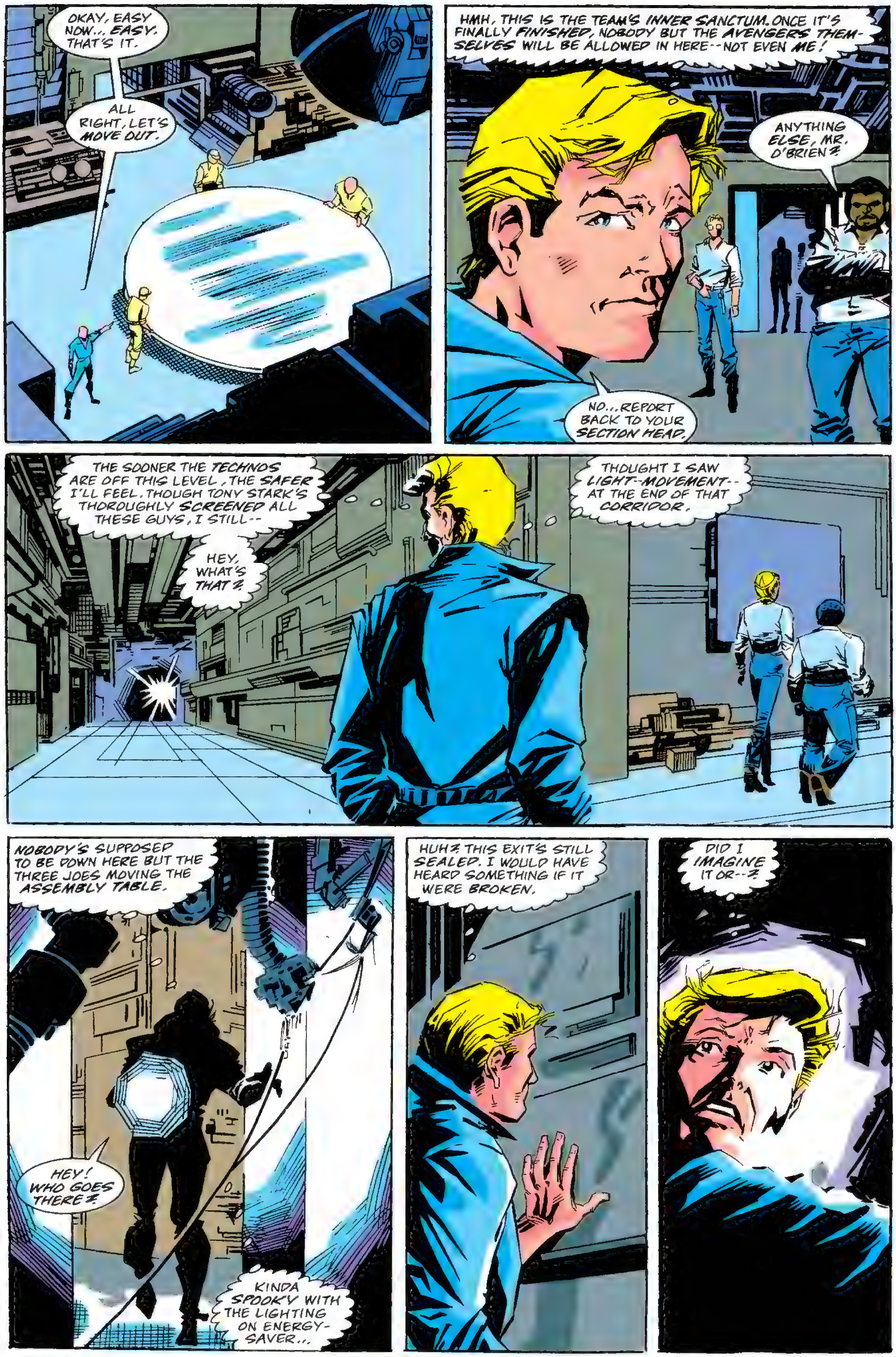

RUMMM
<COLONEL-GENERAL! THE SUPER HEROES ARE HERE!>


THE-CANADIAN-ARMED-FORCES-ARE-ON-FULL ALERT.
SERSI, DO YOU THINK YOU COULD STOP THEM FROM HERE IF YOU HAD TO?
TRANSMUTE THEM INTO FLIES OR SOMETHING?
THE DISTANCE IS TOO GREAT FOR THAT-
AND IF I HAD THE SLIGHTEST INKLING OF THE MECHANICAL FUNDAMENTALS INVOLVED IN THE CREATION OF A VESSEL THAT SIZE--
-I WOULD HAVE STOPPED THE SUBMARINE LONG AGO!

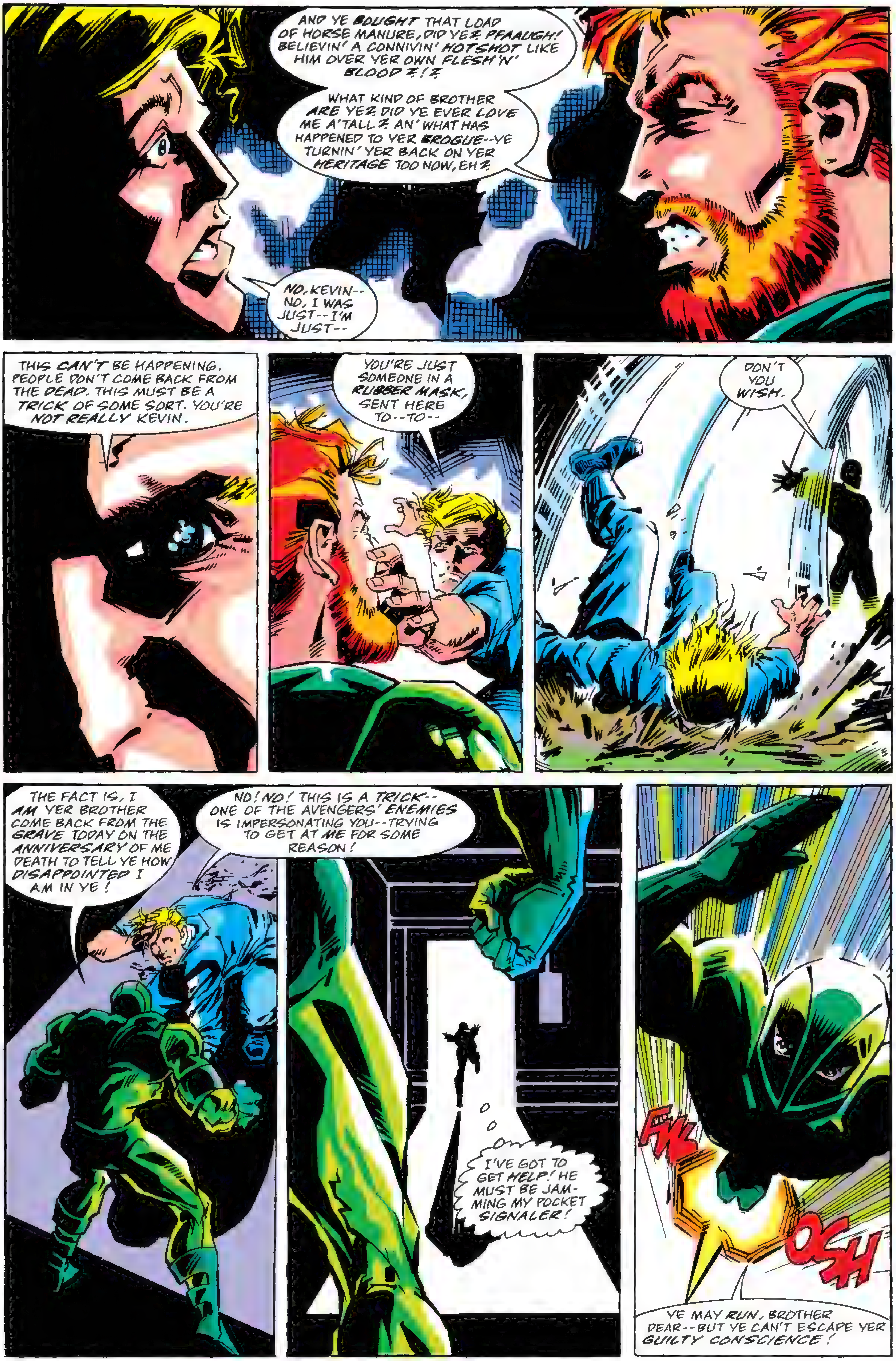

COSTUMED HEROES -- I AM THE LEADER OF THE *PEACE CORPSE!*
WE *DEMAND* ACCESS TO THIS ISLAND'S MARITIME FACILITIES!
WE CANNOT NEGOTIATE UNTIL THE HOSTAGES ARE FREED AND THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS *DISARMED!*
I WILL EXECUTE ONE HOSTAGE EVERY *FIVE MINUTES* UNTIL OUR DEMANDS ARE MET!
STARTING WITH YOUR COMRADE!
THEY-CAN-NOT-LAUNCH-THEIR-NUCLEAR-COMPLEMENT-FROM-A-SURFACE-POSITION.
IF-THEY-WERE-TO-EXECUTE-THE-HOSTAGES-THEY-WOULD-BE-IN-A-DEFENSELESS-POSITION-IN-APPROXIMATELY-FIVE-HOURS!
ARE YOU SUGGESTING WE *ALLOW* THEM TO *KILL* OVER *ONE HUNDRED* MEN??
THEY MUST REALIZE, AS DO WE, THAT THE HOSTAGES ARE THE *ONLY* THINGS PREVENTING US FROM ATTACKING.
LOGIC WOULD DICTATE THAT THEY WOULD SPARE THEM AT ALL COSTS.
YOU'RE *RIGHT,* VISION.
PEACE CORPSE -- WE WILL *NOT* ACCEPT YOUR DEMANDS AS THEY HAVE BEEN CURRENTLY PROPOSED!
VERY WELL, THEN.
KPOW

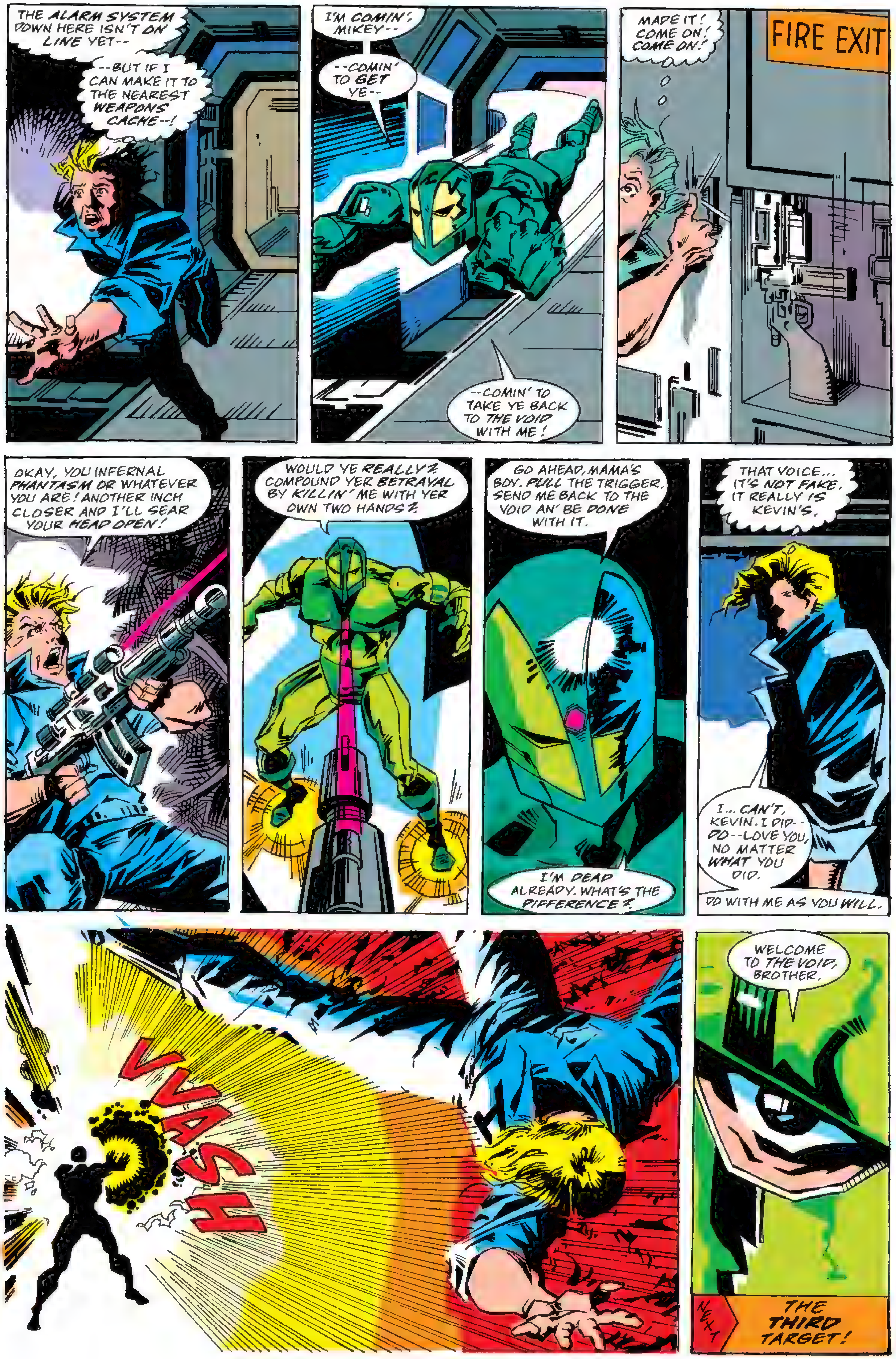
YOU HAVE FIVE MINUTES TO CHANGE YOUR MINDS.
NO! THEY KILLED STINGRAY!!
EASY, SON.
THE TIME FOR TALK IS OVER, COMRADES.
ACCEPTABLE LOSS OF LIFE MUST BE EXPECTED AND TERRORISTS STOPPED.
⟨WHO?⟩
I DON'T THINK SO, FOLKS.
INTERESTING.
NO CITIZENS AND NO PROPERTY WILL BE PLACED IN JEOPARDY WITHOUT OUR SAY SO.
IN CASE YOU'VE FORGOTTEN, YOU'RE ON CANADIAN SOIL, WHICH MEANS JURISDICTION OF THIS LITTLE MESS PASSES ON TO--
Alpha Flight
TO BE CONTINUED!


STAN LEE PRESENTS:
THE AVENGERS CREW
THE HIGHLY SECURE SUB-BASEMENT OF THE AVENGERS' NEW HEADQUARTERS COMPLEX, STILL UNDER CONSTRUCTION...
AVENGERS CHIEF OF SECURITY MICHAEL O'BRIEN HAS MADE IT A POINT TO PERSONALLY ESCORT EVERY STARK ENTERPRISES TECHNICIAN WHO SETS FOOT IN THE MAXIMUM SECURITY AREAS...
IT'S REALLY A SHAME THE AVENGERS' ORIGINAL CONFERENCE TABLE WAS DESTROYED WHEN HYDROBASE SANK!*
THAT TABLE WAS LIKE A PIECE OF HISTORY!
I HOPE THEY LIKE THE NEW ONE I REQUISITIONED --IT CERTAINLY COST ENOUGH!
*AVENGERS #309.--HOWARD
LEFT AT THE END OF THIS CORRIDOR, MEN. AND WATCH YOUR STEP. WOULDN'T DO TO SCRATCH A FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLAR PIECE OF EQUIPMENT, NOW WOULD IT?
FIFTY THOU FOR AN OVERSIZED CARD TABLE-- SHEESH!
CHANGING OF THE GUARD
STORY-MARK GRUENWALD
PENCILS-JAMES FRY
INKS-KEITH WILLIAMS
LETTERS-GARY FIELDS
COLORS-JOE ROSAS


OKAY, EASY NOW... EASY. THAT'S IT.
ALL RIGHT, LET'S MOVE OUT.
HMH. THIS IS THE TEAM'S INNER SANCTUM. ONCE IT'S FINALLY FINISHED, NOBODY BUT THE AVENGERS THEMSELVES WILL BE ALLOWED IN HERE--NOT EVEN ME!
ANYTHING ELSE, MR. O'BRIEN?
NO... REPORT BACK TO YOUR SECTION HEAD.
THE SOONER THE TECHNOS ARE OFF THIS LEVEL, THE SAFER I'LL FEEL. THOUGH TONY STARK'S THOROUGHLY SCREENED ALL THESE GUYS, I STILL--
HEY. WHAT'S THAT?
THOUGHT I SAW LIGHT--MOVEMENT--AT THE END OF THAT CORRIDOR.
NOBODY'S SUPPOSED TO BE DOWN HERE BUT THE THREE JOES MOVING THE ASSEMBLY TABLE.
HEY! WHO GOES THERE?
KINDA SPOOKY WITH THE LIGHTING ON ENERGY-SAVER...
HUH? THIS EXIT'S STILL SEALED. I WOULD HAVE HEARD SOMETHING IF IT WERE BROKEN.
DID I IMAGINE IT OR--?

A--A GUARDSMAN!
DON'T KNOW HOW YOU GOT DOWN HERE, PAL, BUT--
--BUT YOU'D BETTER-- WHA--?!?
TSK TSK, MICHAEL, ME BOY. YER LOSIN' YER GRIP, AIN'T YE?
CLNK
THAT VOICE... NO! IT SOUNDS LIKE--
INDEED, ME LOVIN' BABY BROTHER! 'TIS ME.
KEVIN? NO! IT--IT CAN'T BE YOU! YOU'RE DEAD--YOU DIED IN A BATTLE WITH IRON MAN YEARS AGO!
THAT'S RIGHT, MICHAEL. I DID.
AND JUST WHAT DID YE DO ABOUT IT? DID YE AVENGE ME? DID YE MAKE IRON MAN PAY FER WHAT HE DID TO YER ONLY LIVIN' KIN?
NO. QUITE THE OPPOSITE.
I WAS GOING TO. I PUT ON THE GUARDSMAN ARMOR, SQUARED OFF AGAINST HIM... BUT HE--HE CONVINCED ME THAT WHAT YOU BELIEVED ABOUT HIM WAS WRONG, KEVIN!
HE DIDN'T TRY TO STEAL YOUR WOMAN, KEVIN! HE--


AND YE BOUGHT THAT LOAD OF HORSE MANURE, DID YE? PFAAUGH! BELIEVIN' A CONNIVIN' HOTSHOT LIKE HIM OVER YER OWN FLESH 'N' BLOOD?!?
WHAT KIND OF BROTHER ARE YE? DID YE EVER LOVE ME A'TALL? AN' WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO YER BROGUE--YE TURNIN' YER BACK ON YER HERITAGE TOO NOW, EH?
NO, KEVIN--NO, I WAS JUST--I'M JUST--
THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING. PEOPLE DON'T COME BACK FROM THE DEAD. THIS MUST BE A TRICK OF SOME SORT. YOU'RE NOT REALLY KEVIN.
YOU'RE JUST SOMEONE IN A RUBBER MASK, SENT HERE TO--TO--
DON'T YOU WISH.
THE FACT IS, I AM YER BROTHER COME BACK FROM THE GRAVE TODAY ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF ME DEATH TO TELL YE HOW DISAPPOINTED I AM IN YE!
NO! NO! THIS IS A TRICK--ONE OF THE AVENGERS' ENEMIES IS IMPERSONATING YOU--TRYING TO GET AT ME FOR SOME REASON!
I'VE GOT TO GET HELP! HE MUST BE JAMMING MY POCKET SIGNALER!
FWOOSH
YE MAY RUN, BROTHER DEAR--BUT YE CAN'T ESCAPE YER GUILTY CONSCIENCE!


THE ALARM SYSTEM DOWN HERE ISN'T ON LINE YET--
--BUT IF I CAN MAKE IT TO THE NEAREST WEAPONS CACHE--!
I'M COMIN', MIKEY--
--COMIN' TO GET YE--
--COMIN' TO TAKE YE BACK TO THE VOID WITH ME!
MADE IT! COME ON! COME ON!
FIRE EXIT
OKAY, YOU INFERNAL PHANTASM OR WHATEVER YOU ARE! ANOTHER INCH CLOSER AND I'LL SEAR YOUR HEAD OPEN!
WOULD YE REALLY? COMPOUND YER BETRAYAL BY KILLIN' ME WITH YER OWN TWO HANDS?
GO AHEAD, MAMA'S BOY. PULL THE TRIGGER. SEND ME BACK TO THE VOID AN' BE DONE WITH IT.
I'M DEAD ALREADY. WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?
THAT VOICE... IT'S NOT FAKE. IT REALLY IS KEVIN'S.
I... CAN'T, KEVIN. I DID--DO--LOVE YOU, NO MATTER WHAT YOU DID.
DO WITH ME AS YOU WILL.
VVASH
WELCOME TO THE VOID, BROTHER.
NEXT
THE THIRD TARGET!

MARVEL® COMICS
THE CROSSING LINE PART 3 OF SIX
AVENGERS®
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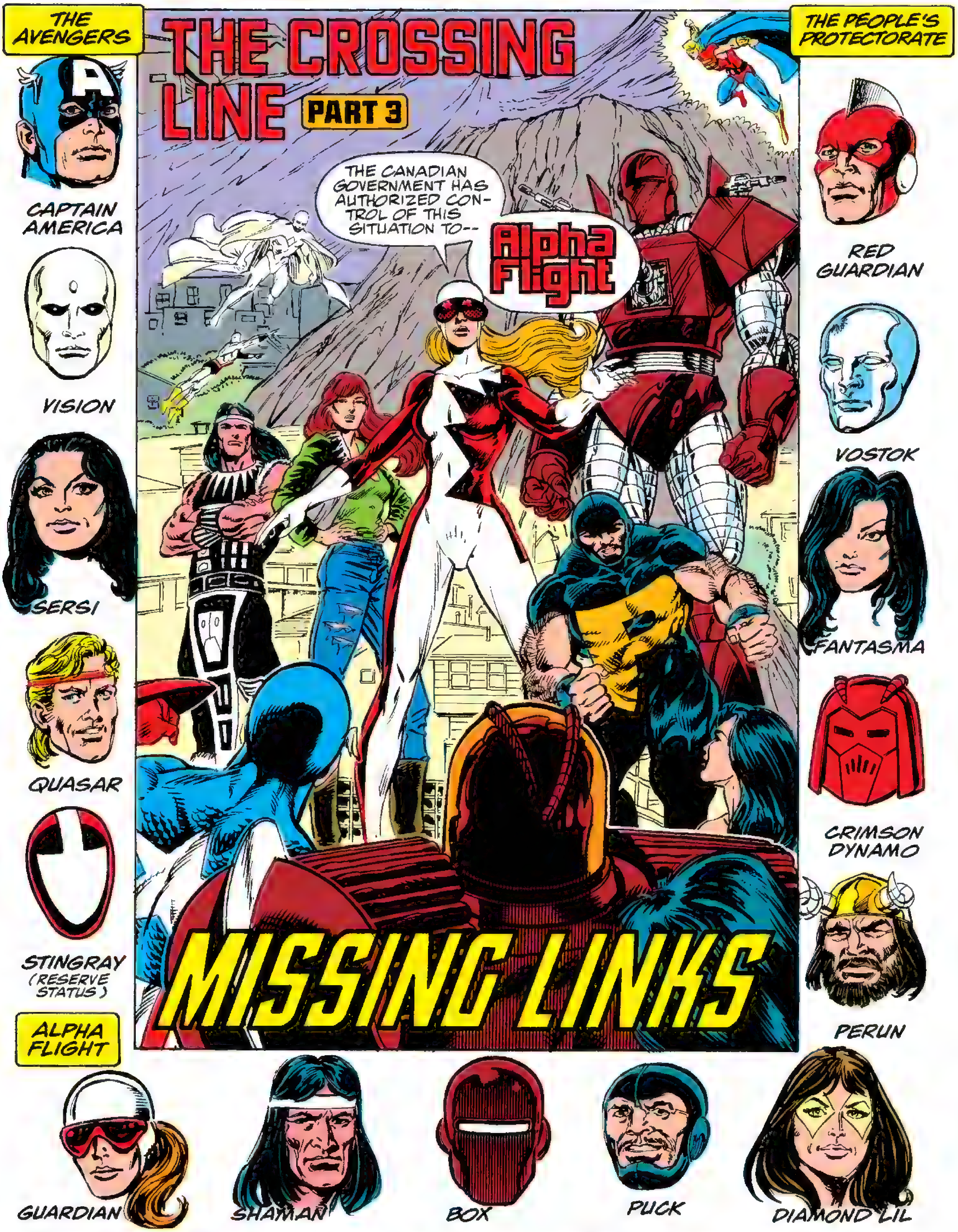
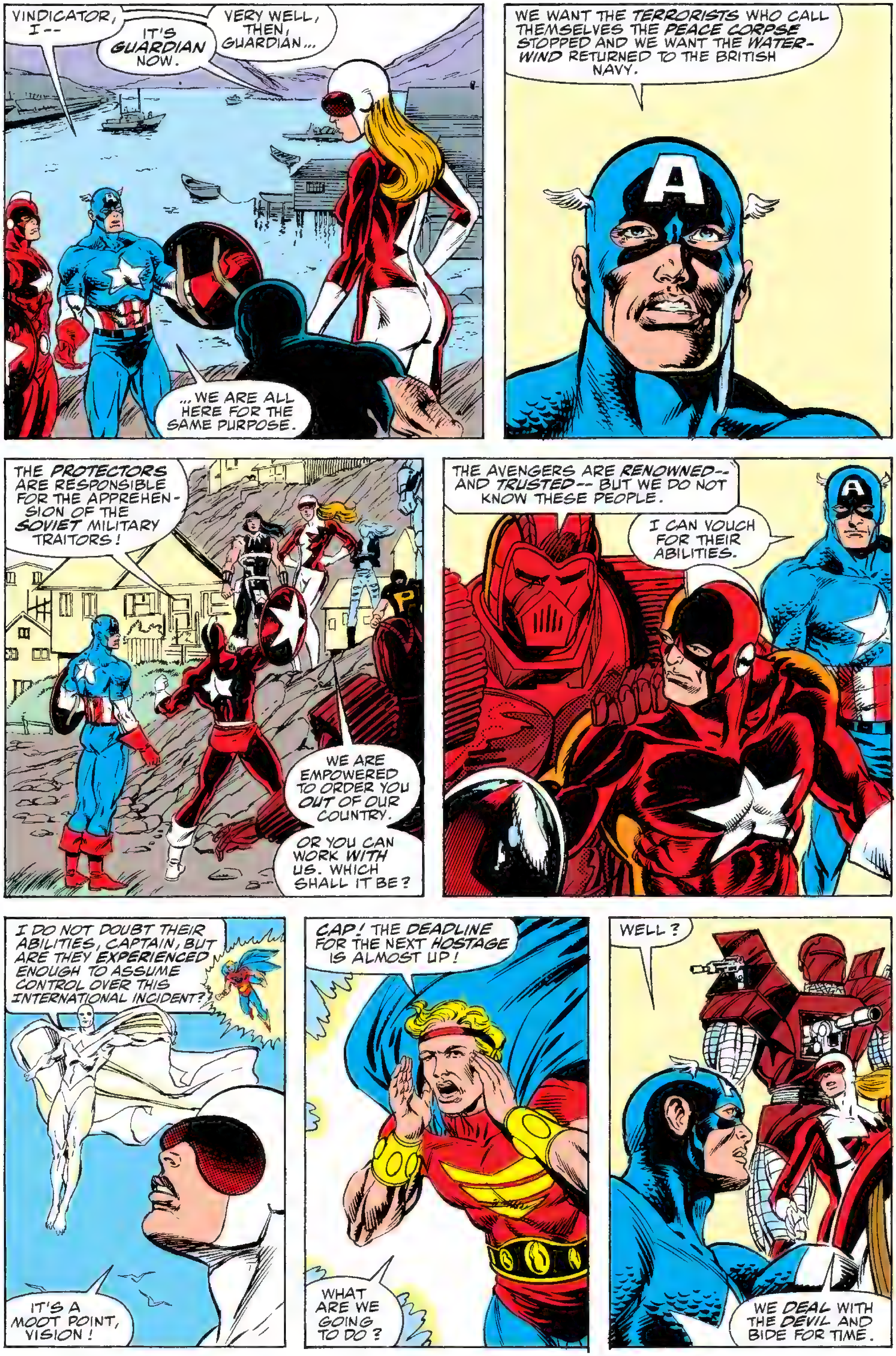
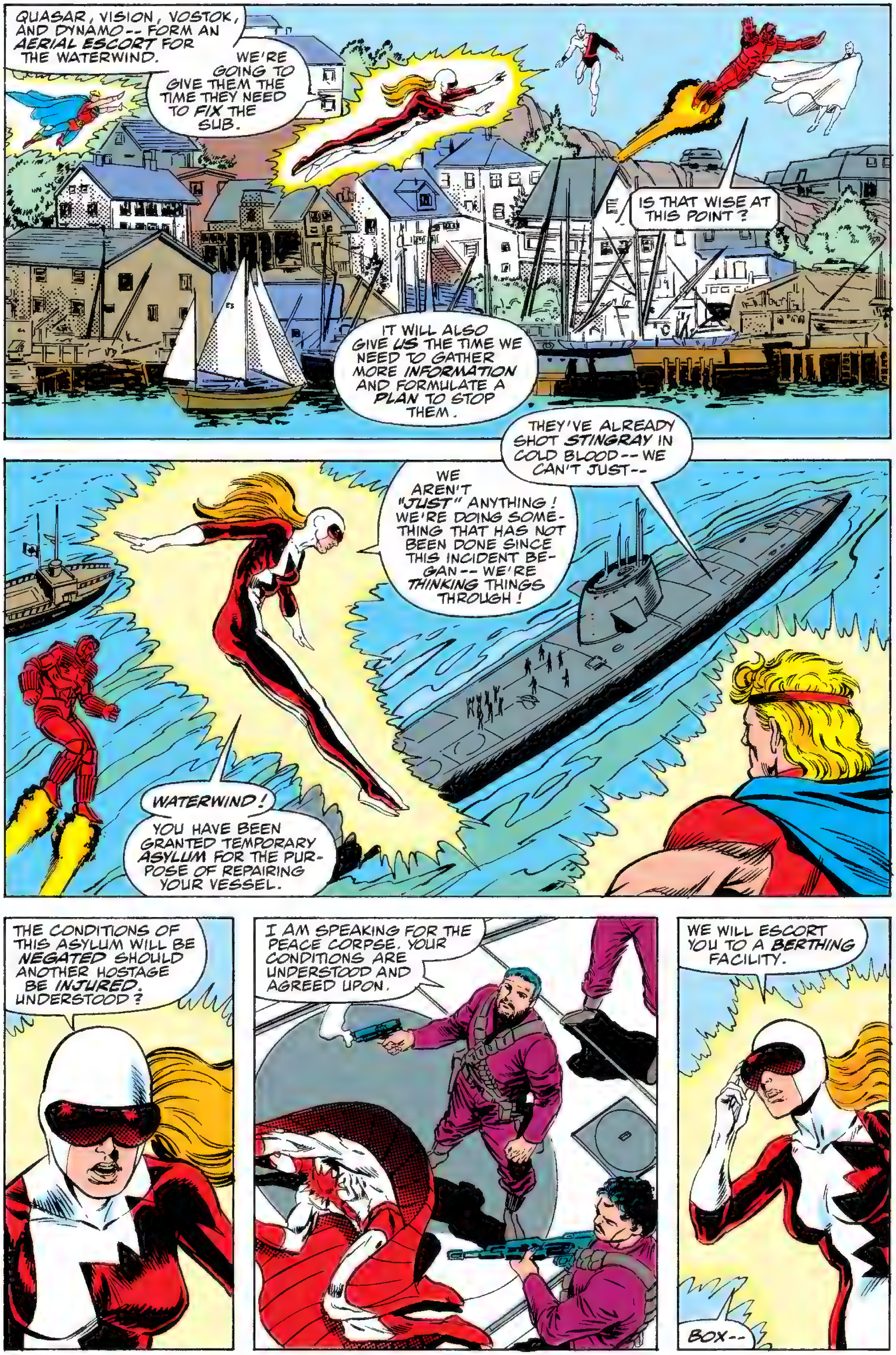
321
LATE AUG
02458
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
KUAN '90
STRIKE FORCE!

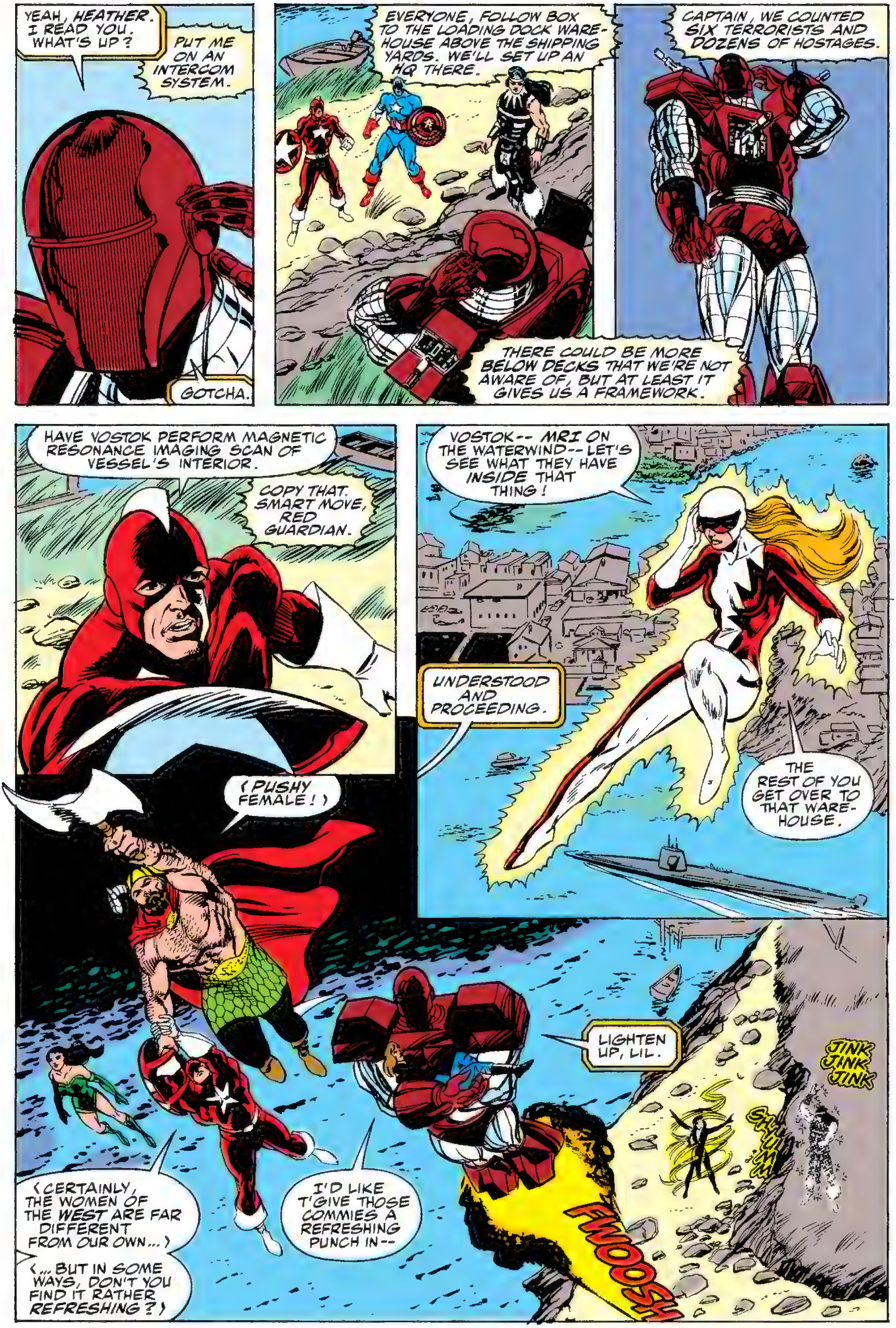
TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND! STAN LEE PRESENTS . . . THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

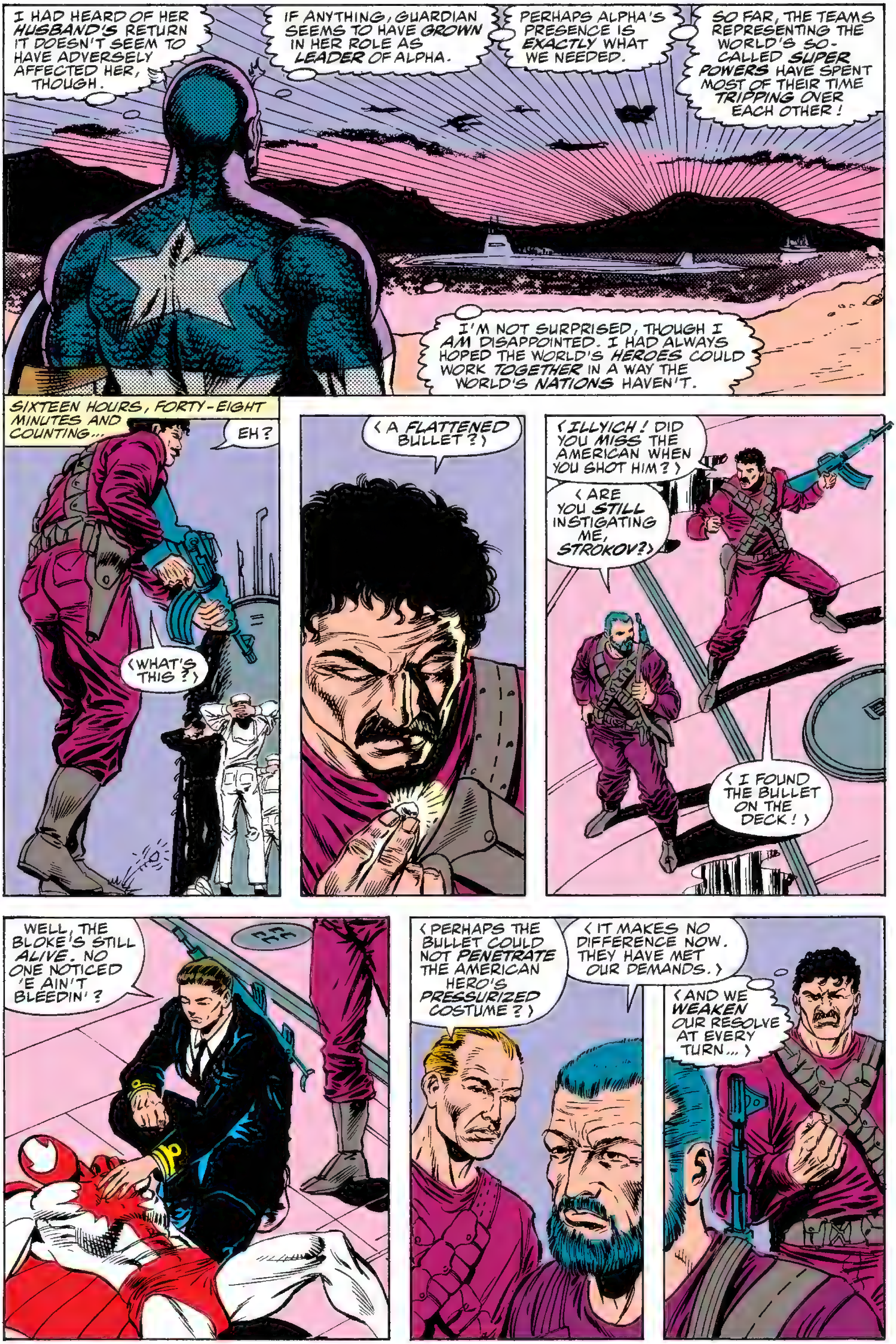

THE AVENGERS
THE CROSSING LINE PART 3
THE PEOPLE'S PROTECTORATE
CAPTAIN AMERICA
THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT HAS AUTHORIZED CONTROL OF THIS SITUATION TO-- Alpha Flight
RED GUARDIAN
VISION
VOSTOK
SERSI
FANTASMA
QUASAR
CRIMSON DYNAMO
STINGRAY (RESERVE STATUS)
MISSING LINKS
PERUN
ALPHA FLIGHT
GUARDIAN
SHAMAN
BOX
PUCK
DIAMOND LIL

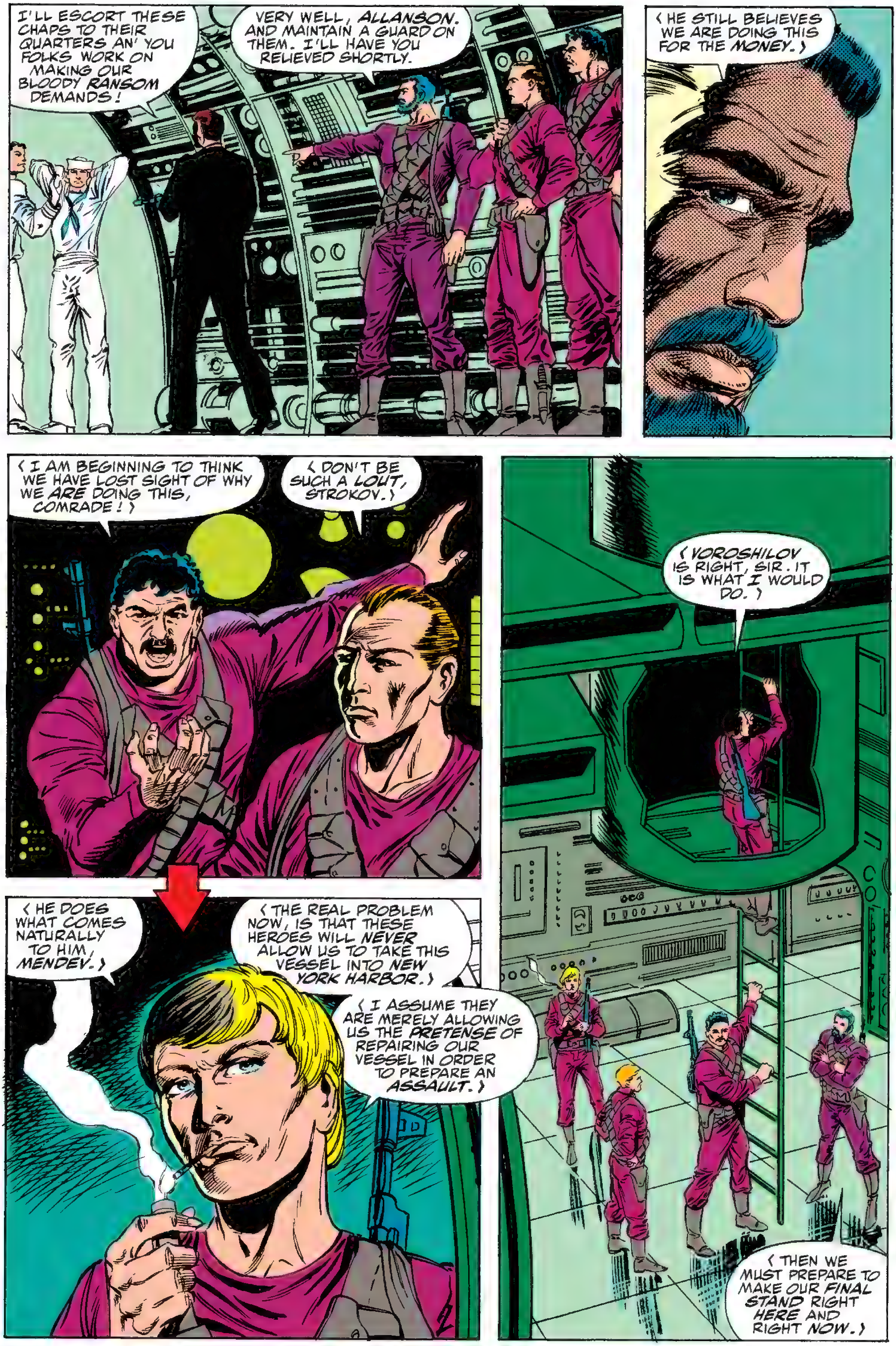
FABIAN NICIEZA WRITER • RIK LEVINS PENCILER • CHRIS IVY INKER • BILL OAKLEY LETTERER • CHRISTIE SCHEELE COLORIST • HOWARD MACKIE EDITOR • TOM DeFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF

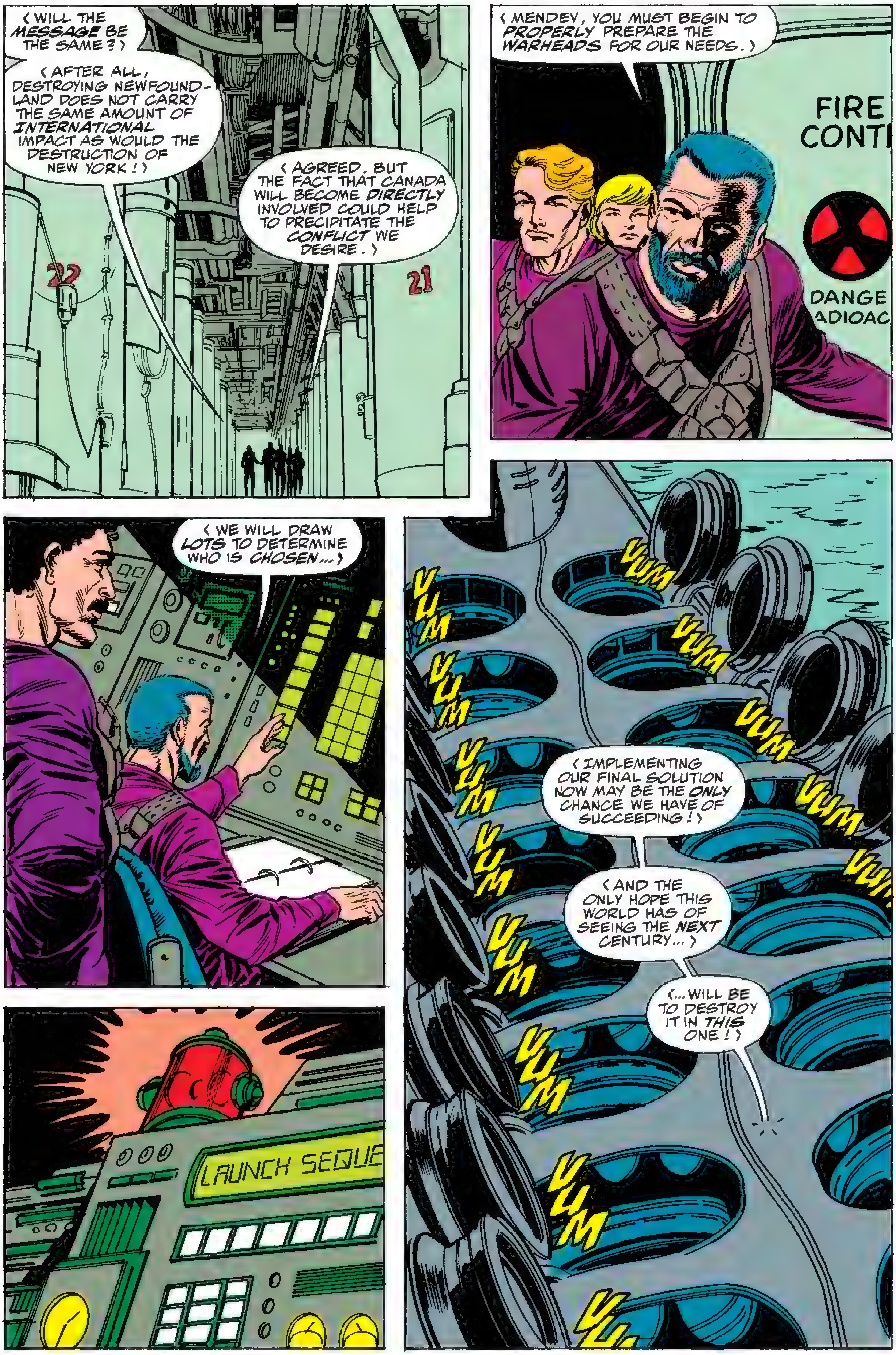

VINDICATOR, I --
IT'S GUARDIAN NOW.
VERY WELL, THEN, GUARDIAN...
...WE ARE ALL HERE FOR THE SAME PURPOSE.
WE WANT THE TERRORISTS WHO CALL THEMSELVES THE PEACE CORPSE STOPPED AND WE WANT THE WATERWIND RETURNED TO THE BRITISH NAVY.
THE PROTECTORS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE APPREHENSION OF THE SOVIET MILITARY TRAITORS!
WE ARE EMPOWERED TO ORDER YOU OUT OF OUR COUNTRY.
OR YOU CAN WORK WITH US. WHICH SHALL IT BE?
THE AVENGERS ARE RENOWNED-- AND TRUSTED-- BUT WE DO NOT KNOW THESE PEOPLE.
I CAN VOUCH FOR THEIR ABILITIES.
I DO NOT DOUBT THEIR ABILITIES, CAPTAIN, BUT ARE THEY EXPERIENCED ENOUGH TO ASSUME CONTROL OVER THIS INTERNATIONAL INCIDENT?
IT'S A MOOT POINT, VISION!
CAP! THE DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT HOSTAGE IS ALMOST UP!
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?
WELL?
WE DEAL WITH THE DEVIL AND BIDE FOR TIME.

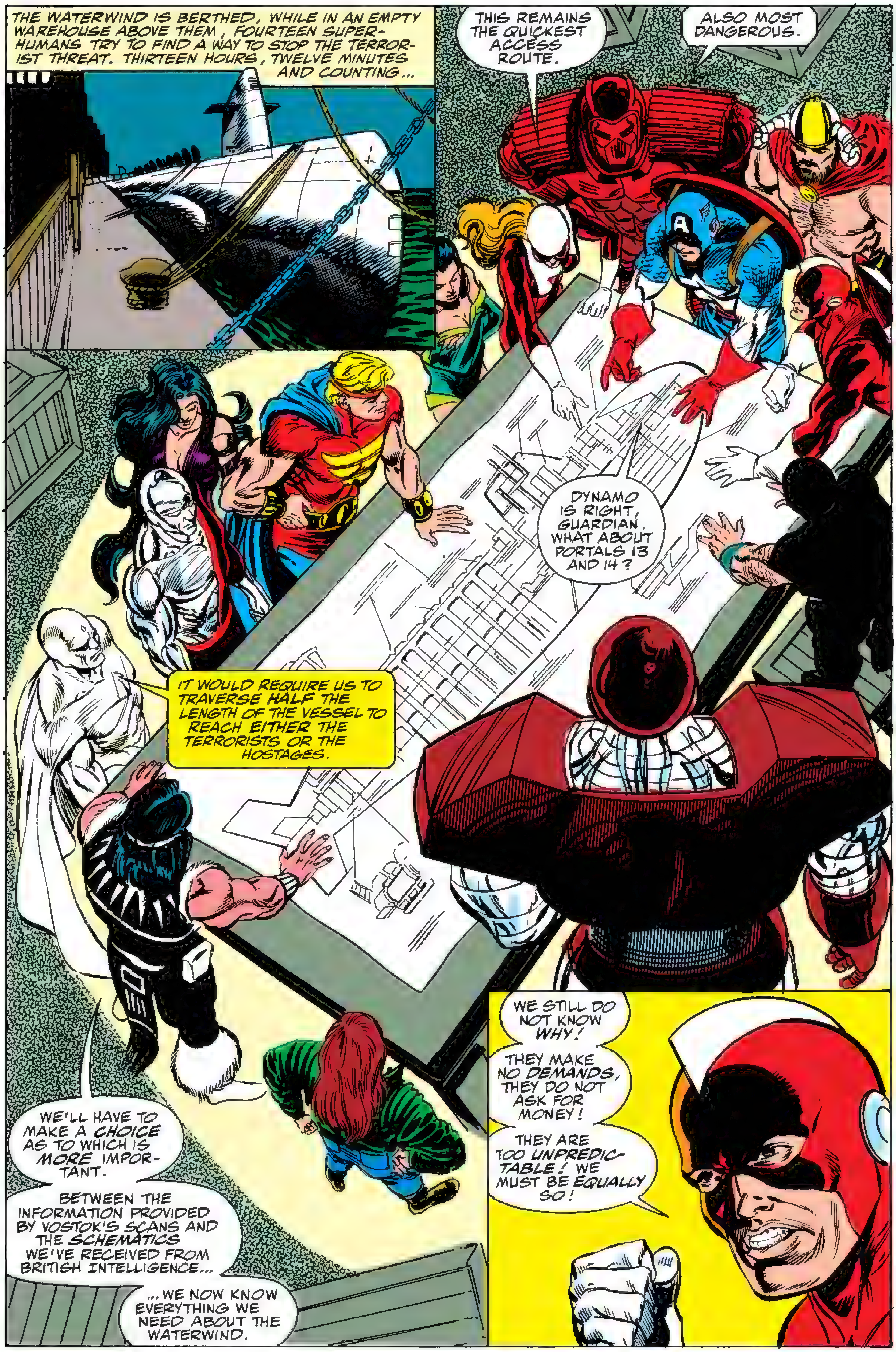

QUASAR, VISION, VOSTOK, AND DYNAMO-- FORM AN AERIAL ESCORT FOR THE WATERWIND.
WE'RE GOING TO GIVE THEM THE TIME THEY NEED TO FIX THE SUB.
IS THAT WISE AT THIS POINT?
IT WILL ALSO GIVE US THE TIME WE NEED TO GATHER MORE INFORMATION AND FORMULATE A PLAN TO STOP THEM.
THEY'VE ALREADY SHOT STINGRAY IN COLD BLOOD-- WE CAN'T JUST--
WE AREN'T "JUST" ANYTHING! WE'RE DOING SOMETHING THAT HAS NOT BEEN DONE SINCE THIS INCIDENT BEGAN-- WE'RE THINKING THINGS THROUGH!
WATERWIND!
YOU HAVE BEEN GRANTED TEMPORARY ASYLUM FOR THE PURPOSE OF REPAIRING YOUR VESSEL.
THE CONDITIONS OF THIS ASYLUM WILL BE NEGATED SHOULD ANOTHER HOSTAGE BE INJURED. UNDERSTOOD?
I AM SPEAKING FOR THE PEACE CORPSE. YOUR CONDITIONS ARE UNDERSTOOD AND AGREED UPON.
WE WILL ESCORT YOU TO A BERTHING FACILITY.
BOX--

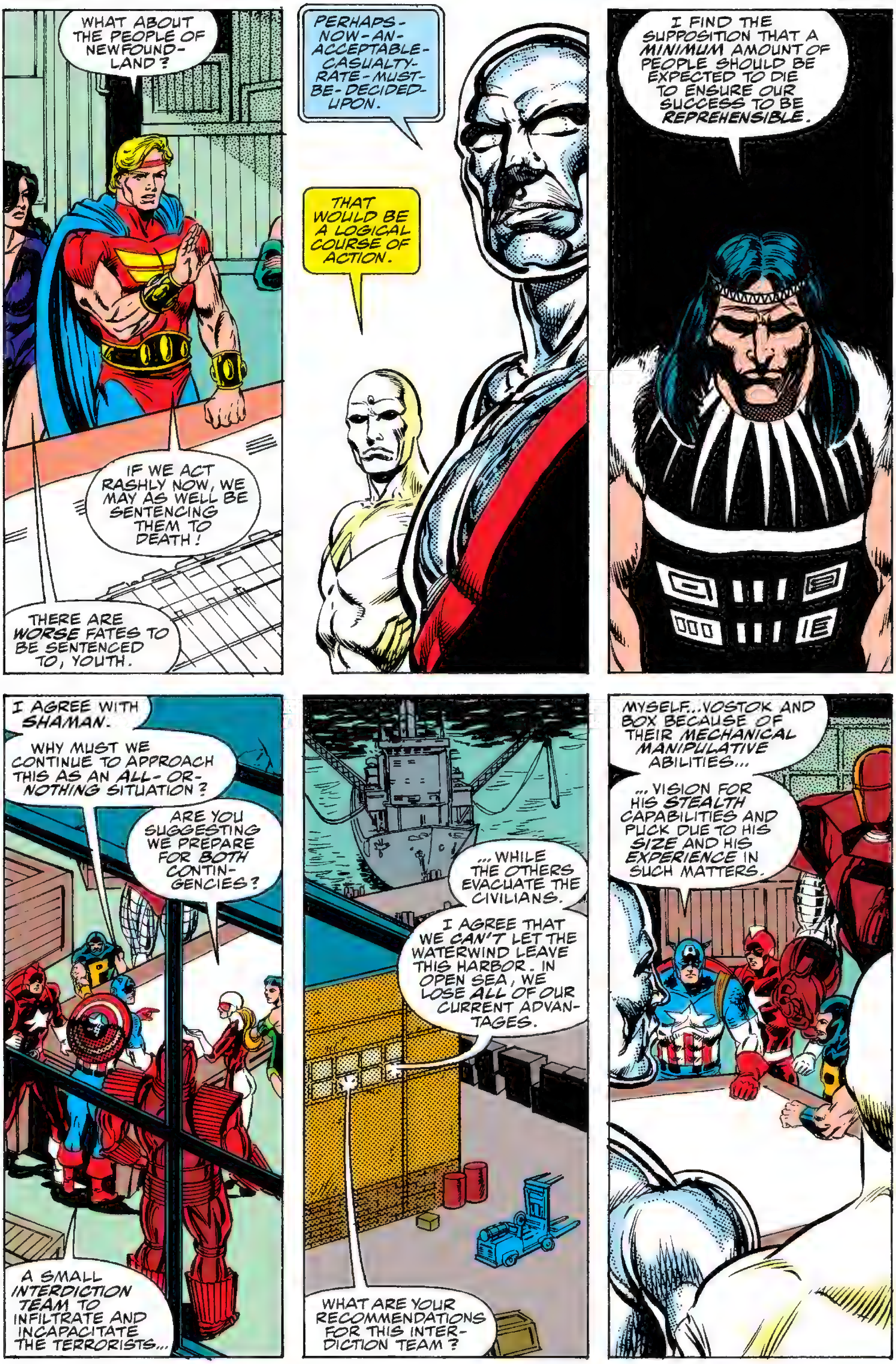

YEAH, HEATHER. I READ YOU. WHAT'S UP?
PUT ME ON AN INTERCOM SYSTEM.
GOTCHA.
EVERYONE, FOLLOW BOX TO THE LOADING DOCK WAREHOUSE ABOVE THE SHIPPING YARDS. WE'LL SET UP AN HQ THERE.
CAPTAIN, WE COUNTED SIX TERRORISTS AND DOZENS OF HOSTAGES.
THERE COULD BE MORE BELOW DECKS THAT WE'RE NOT AWARE OF, BUT AT LEAST IT GIVES US A FRAMEWORK.
HAVE VOSTOK PERFORM MAGNETIC RESONANCE IMAGING SCAN OF VESSEL'S INTERIOR.
COPY THAT. SMART MOVE, RED GUARDIAN.
VOSTOK-- MRI ON THE WATERWIND-- LET'S SEE WHAT THEY HAVE INSIDE THAT THING!
UNDERSTOOD AND PROCEEDING.
THE REST OF YOU GET OVER TO THAT WAREHOUSE.
‹PUSHY FEMALE!›
LIGHTEN UP, LIL.
‹CERTAINLY, THE WOMEN OF THE WEST ARE FAR DIFFERENT FROM OUR OWN...›
‹...BUT IN SOME WAYS, DON'T YOU FIND IT RATHER REFRESHING?›
I'D LIKE T'GIVE THOSE COMMIES A REFRESHING PUNCH IN--
FWOOSH
JINK JINK JINK
SHUMM

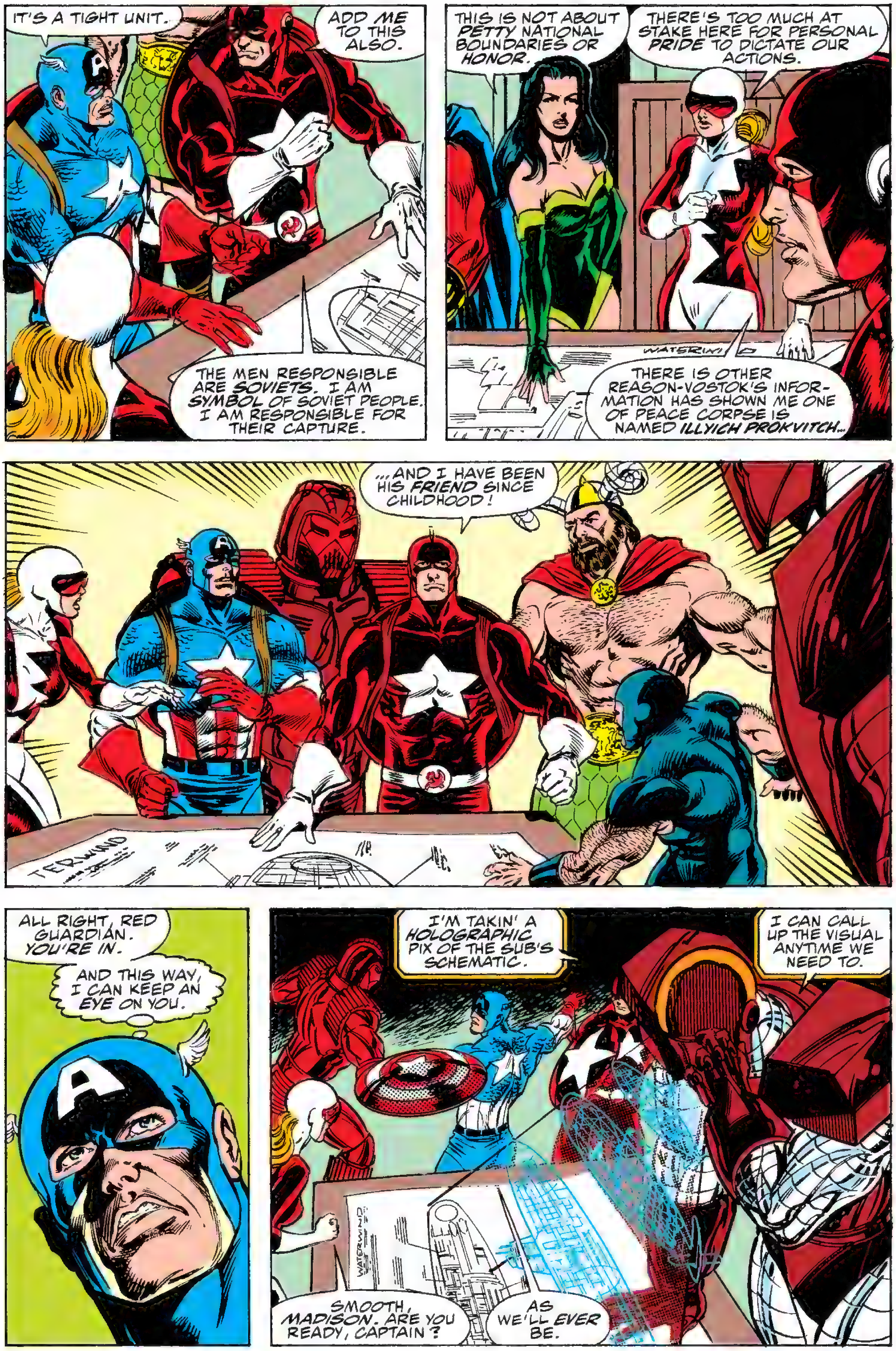

I HAD HEARD OF HER *HUSBAND'S* RETURN. IT DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE ADVERSELY AFFECTED HER, THOUGH.
IF ANYTHING, GUARDIAN SEEMS TO HAVE *GROWN* IN HER ROLE AS *LEADER* OF ALPHA.
PERHAPS ALPHA'S PRESENCE IS *EXACTLY* WHAT WE NEEDED.
SO FAR, THE TEAMS REPRESENTING THE WORLD'S SO-CALLED *SUPER POWERS* HAVE SPENT MOST OF THEIR TIME *TRIPPING* OVER EACH OTHER!
I'M NOT SURPRISED, THOUGH I *AM* DISAPPOINTED. I HAD ALWAYS HOPED THE WORLD'S *HEROES* COULD WORK *TOGETHER* IN A WAY THE WORLD'S *NATIONS* HAVEN'T.
SIXTEEN HOURS, FORTY-EIGHT MINUTES AND COUNTING...
EH?
‹WHAT'S THIS?›
‹A *FLATTENED* BULLET?›
‹*ILLYICH!* DID YOU *MISS* THE AMERICAN WHEN YOU SHOT HIM?›
‹ARE YOU *STILL* INSTIGATING ME, *STROKOV?*›
‹I FOUND THE BULLET ON THE DECK!›
WELL, THE BLOKE'S STILL *ALIVE*. NO ONE NOTICED 'E AIN'T BLEEDIN'?
‹PERHAPS THE BULLET COULD NOT *PENETRATE* THE AMERICAN HERO'S *PRESSURIZED* COSTUME?›
‹IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE NOW. THEY HAVE MET OUR DEMANDS.›
‹AND WE *WEAKEN* OUR RESOLVE AT EVERY TURN...›


I'LL ESCORT THESE CHAPS TO THEIR QUARTERS AN' YOU FOLKS WORK ON MAKING OUR BLOODY *RANSOM* DEMANDS!
VERY WELL, *ALLANSON*. AND MAINTAIN A GUARD ON THEM. I'LL HAVE YOU RELIEVED SHORTLY.
‹ HE STILL BELIEVES WE ARE DOING THIS FOR THE *MONEY*. ›
‹ I AM BEGINNING TO THINK WE HAVE LOST SIGHT OF WHY WE *ARE* DOING THIS, COMRADE! ›
‹ DON'T BE SUCH A *LOUT*, STROKOV. ›
‹ HE DOES WHAT COMES NATURALLY TO HIM, *MENDEV*. ›
‹ THE REAL PROBLEM NOW, IS THAT THESE HEROES WILL *NEVER* ALLOW US TO TAKE THIS VESSEL INTO *NEW YORK HARBOR*. ›
‹ I ASSUME THEY ARE MERELY ALLOWING US THE *PRETENSE* OF REPAIRING OUR VESSEL IN ORDER TO PREPARE AN *ASSAULT*. ›
‹ *VOROSHILOV* IS RIGHT, SIR. IT IS WHAT *I* WOULD DO. ›
‹ THEN WE MUST PREPARE TO MAKE OUR *FINAL STAND* RIGHT *HERE* AND RIGHT *NOW*. ›

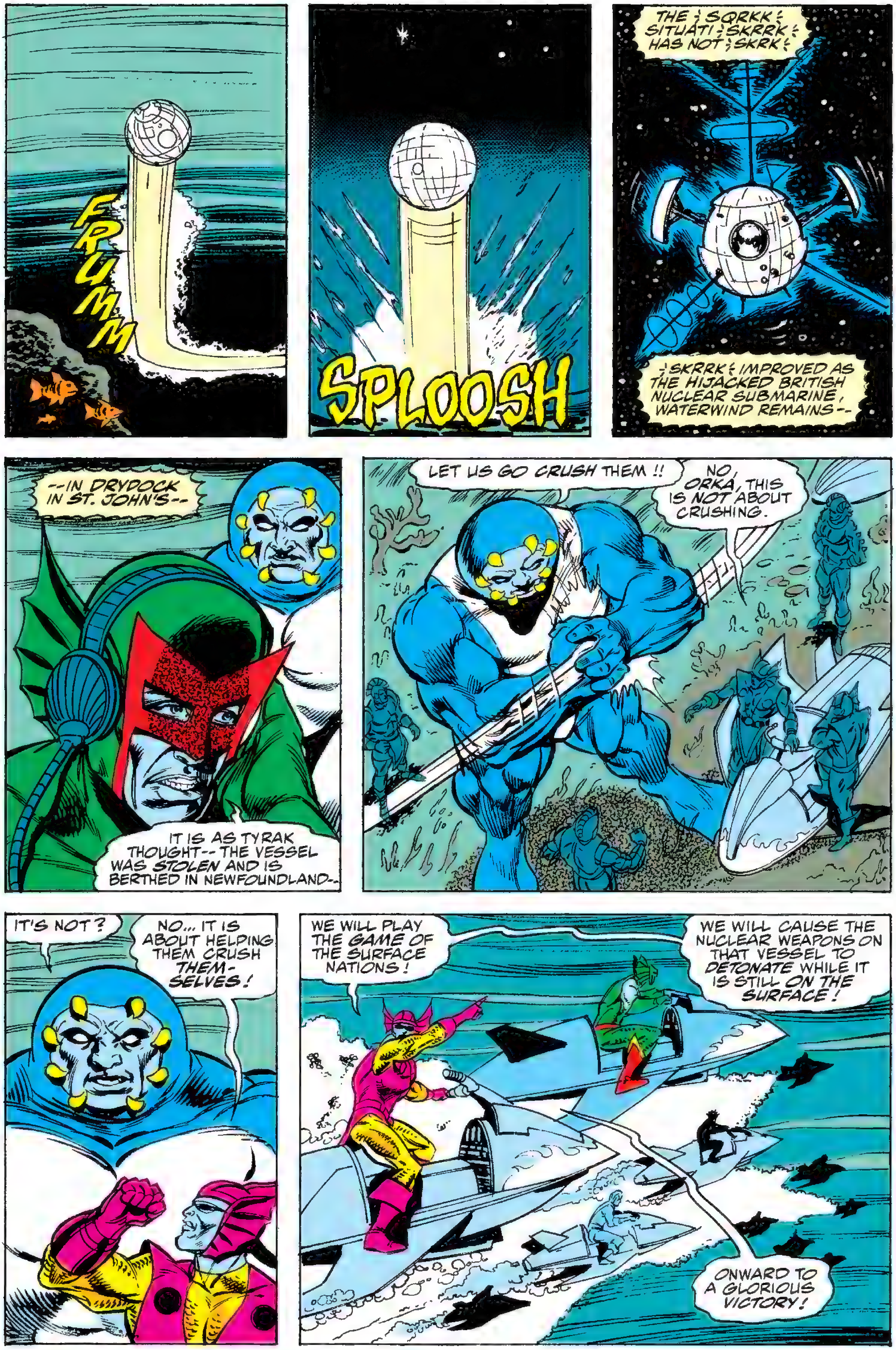

‹ WILL THE MESSAGE BE THE SAME? ›
‹ AFTER ALL, DESTROYING NEWFOUNDLAND DOES NOT CARRY THE SAME AMOUNT OF INTERNATIONAL IMPACT AS WOULD THE DESTRUCTION OF NEW YORK! ›
‹ AGREED. BUT THE FACT THAT CANADA WILL BECOME DIRECTLY INVOLVED COULD HELP TO PRECIPITATE THE CONFLICT WE DESIRE. ›
22
21
‹ MENDEV, YOU MUST BEGIN TO PROPERLY PREPARE THE WARHEADS FOR OUR NEEDS. ›
FIRE
CONT
DANGE
ADIOAC
‹ WE WILL DRAW LOTS TO DETERMINE WHO IS CHOSEN... ›
LAUNCH SEQUE
VUM VUM VUM VUM VUM VUM VUM VUM VUM
VUM VUM VUM VUM VUM VUM
‹ IMPLEMENTING OUR FINAL SOLUTION NOW MAY BE THE ONLY CHANCE WE HAVE OF SUCCEEDING! ›
‹ AND THE ONLY HOPE THIS WORLD HAS OF SEEING THE NEXT CENTURY... ›
‹ ...WILL BE TO DESTROY IT IN THIS ONE! ›

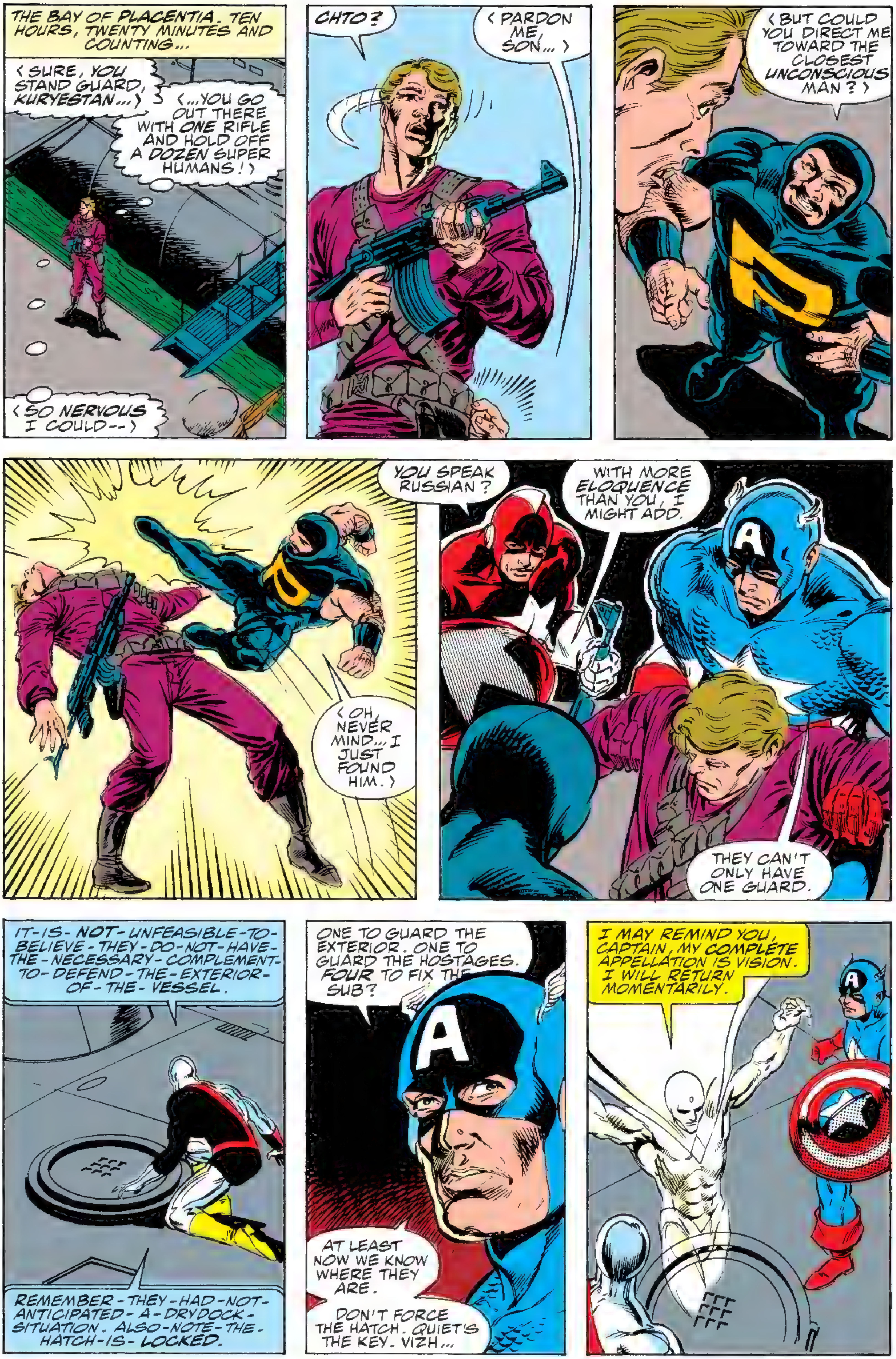

THE WATERWIND IS BERTHED, WHILE IN AN EMPTY WAREHOUSE ABOVE THEM, FOURTEEN SUPER-HUMANS TRY TO FIND A WAY TO STOP THE TERRORIST THREAT. THIRTEEN HOURS, TWELVE MINUTES AND COUNTING...
THIS REMAINS THE QUICKEST ACCESS ROUTE.
ALSO MOST DANGEROUS.
DYNAMO IS RIGHT, GUARDIAN. WHAT ABOUT PORTALS 13 AND 14?
IT WOULD REQUIRE US TO TRAVERSE *HALF* THE LENGTH OF THE VESSEL TO REACH *EITHER* THE TERRORISTS OR THE HOSTAGES.
WE'LL HAVE TO MAKE A *CHOICE* AS TO WHICH IS *MORE* IMPORTANT.
BETWEEN THE INFORMATION PROVIDED BY VOSTOK'S SCANS AND THE *SCHEMATICS* WE'VE RECEIVED FROM BRITISH INTELLIGENCE...
...WE NOW KNOW EVERYTHING WE NEED ABOUT THE WATERWIND.
WE STILL DO NOT KNOW *WHY*!
THEY MAKE NO *DEMANDS*, THEY DO NOT ASK FOR MONEY!
THEY ARE TOO *UNPREDICTABLE*! WE MUST BE *EQUALLY* SO!

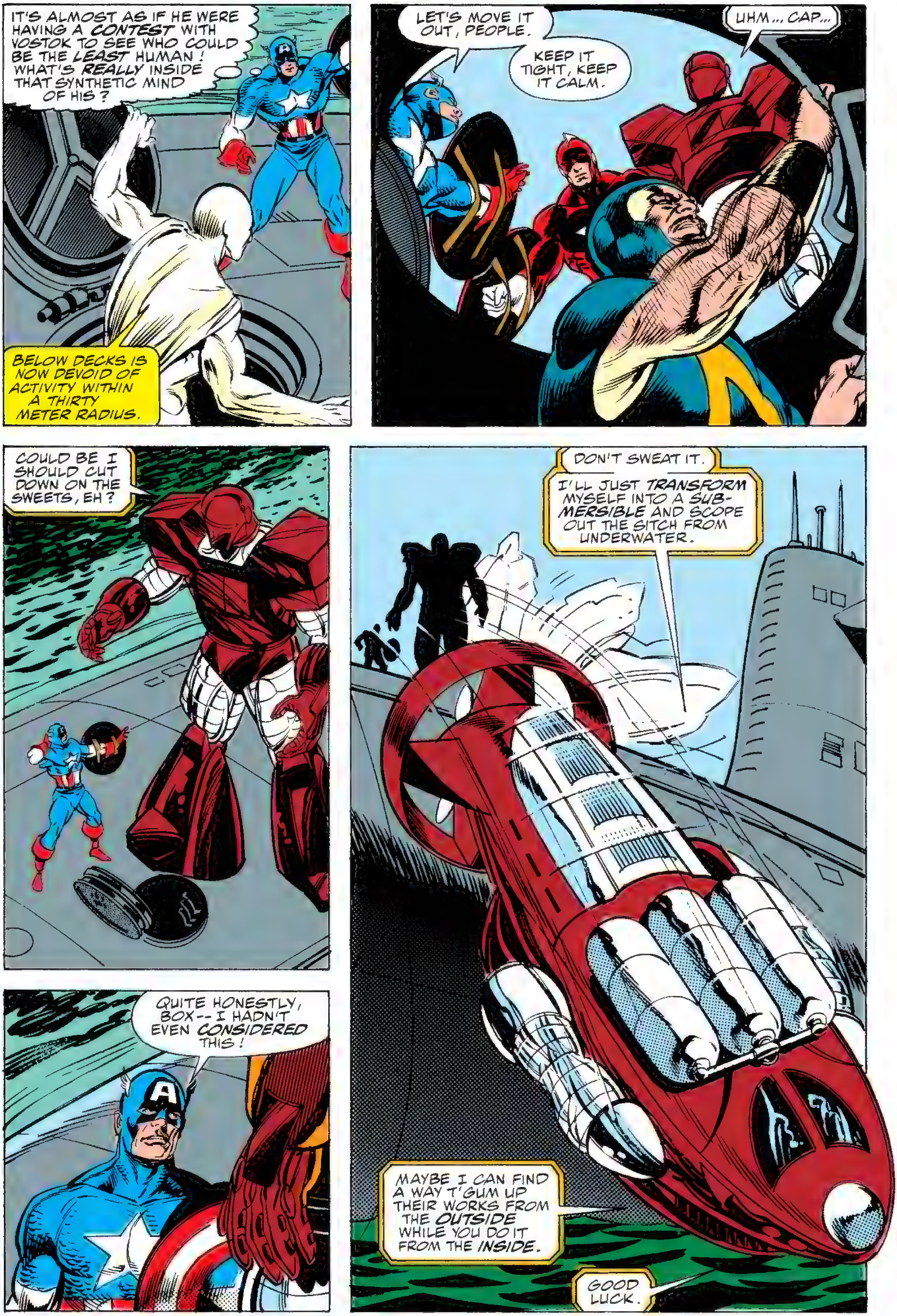

WHAT ABOUT THE PEOPLE OF NEWFOUNDLAND?
IF WE ACT RASHLY NOW, WE MAY AS WELL BE SENTENCING THEM TO DEATH!
THERE ARE *WORSE* FATES TO BE SENTENCED TO, YOUTH.
PERHAPS-NOW-AN-ACCEPTABLE-CASUALTY-RATE-MUST-BE-DECIDED-UPON.
THAT WOULD BE A LOGICAL COURSE OF ACTION.
I FIND THE SUPPOSITION THAT A *MINIMUM* AMOUNT OF PEOPLE SHOULD BE EXPECTED TO DIE TO ENSURE OUR SUCCESS TO BE *REPREHENSIBLE*.
I AGREE WITH *SHAMAN*.
WHY MUST WE CONTINUE TO APPROACH THIS AS AN *ALL-OR-NOTHING* SITUATION?
ARE YOU SUGGESTING WE PREPARE FOR *BOTH* CONTINGENCIES?
A SMALL *INTERDICTION TEAM* TO INFILTRATE AND INCAPACITATE THE TERRORISTS...
...WHILE THE OTHERS EVACUATE THE CIVILIANS.
I AGREE THAT WE *CAN'T* LET THE WATERWIND LEAVE THIS HARBOR. IN OPEN SEA, WE LOSE *ALL* OF OUR CURRENT ADVANTAGES.
WHAT ARE YOUR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS INTERDICTION TEAM?
MYSELF...VOSTOK AND BOX BECAUSE OF THEIR *MECHANICAL MANIPULATIVE* ABILITIES...
...VISION FOR HIS *STEALTH* CAPABILITIES AND PUCK DUE TO HIS *SIZE* AND HIS *EXPERIENCE* IN SUCH MATTERS.

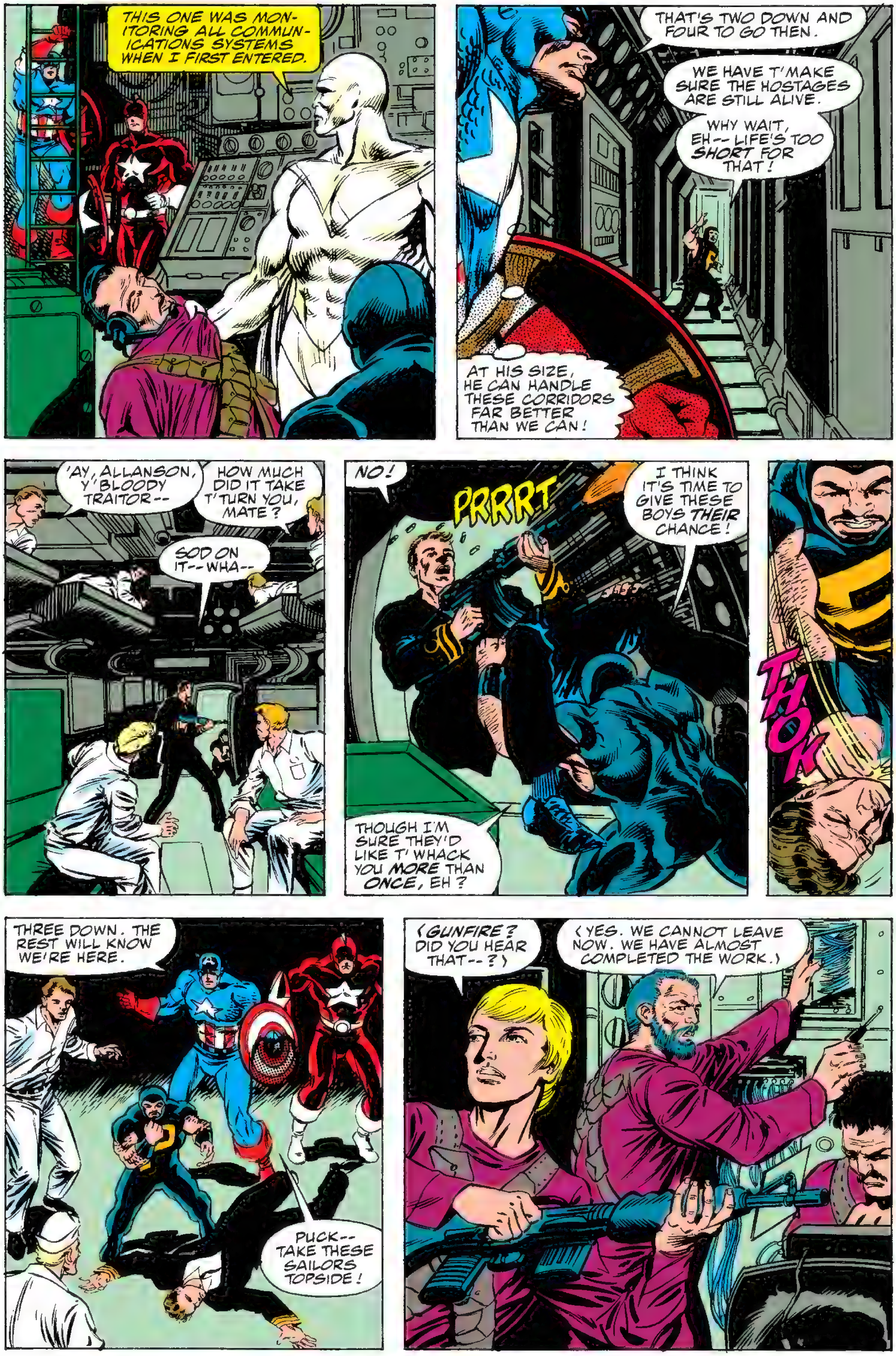

IT'S A TIGHT UNIT.
ADD *ME* TO THIS ALSO.
THE MEN RESPONSIBLE ARE *SOVIETS*. I AM *SYMBOL* OF SOVIET PEOPLE. I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR CAPTURE.
THIS IS NOT ABOUT *PETTY* NATIONAL BOUNDARIES OR *HONOR*.
THERE'S TOO MUCH AT STAKE HERE FOR PERSONAL *PRIDE* TO DICTATE OUR ACTIONS.
WATERWIND
THERE IS OTHER REASON-VOSTOK'S INFORMATION HAS SHOWN ME ONE OF PEACE CORPSE IS NAMED ***ILLYICH PROKVITCH***...
...AND I HAVE BEEN HIS *FRIEND* SINCE CHILDHOOD!
TERWIND
ALL RIGHT, RED GUARDIAN. *YOU'RE IN*.
AND THIS WAY, I CAN KEEP AN *EYE* ON YOU.
I'M TAKIN' A *HOLOGRAPHIC* PIX OF THE SUB'S SCHEMATIC.
I CAN CALL UP THE VISUAL ANYTIME WE NEED TO.
WATERWIND
SMOOTH, *MADISON*. ARE YOU READY, CAPTAIN?
AS WE'LL *EVER* BE.

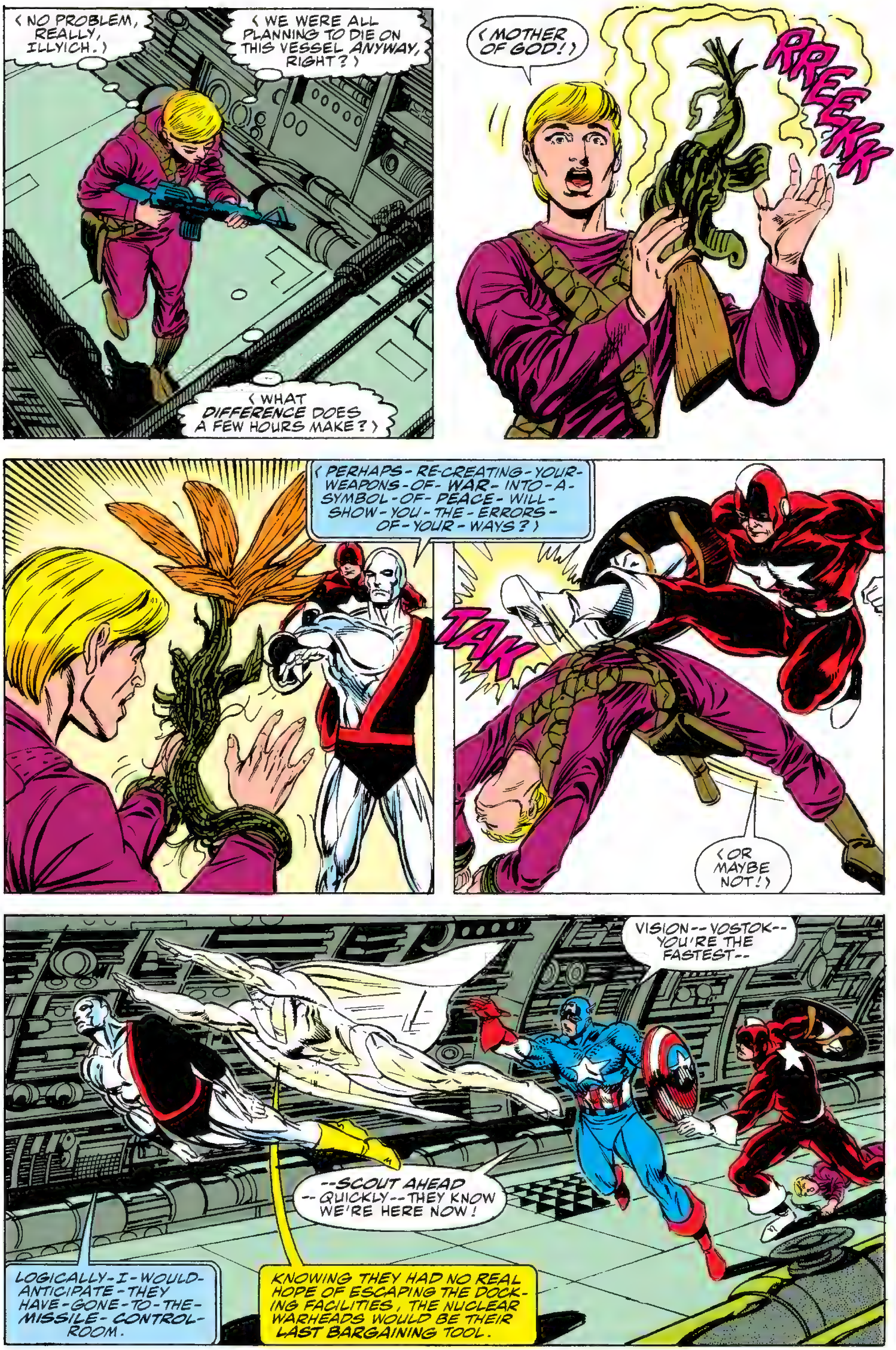
THE DEVASTATED UNDERSEA KINGDOM OF ATLANTIS. ELEVEN HOURS, SEVEN MINUTES AND COUNTING...
AGAIN AND AGAIN THEY DO THIS TO US!!
WE ACT UPON THEM AND THEY CRUSH US! THEY ACT UPON US AND STILL THEY CRUSH US!!
HOW LONG MUST OUR LAND BE SUBJECTED TO THE WHIMS OF SURFACE DWELLERS?
HOW LONG WILL THEY CONTINUE TO DESPOIL OUR SEAS AND FLAGRANTLY TRANSGRESS OUR BORDERS WITH THEIR WEAPONS OF WAR?
IT HAS GONE ON FOR DECADES NOW.
TELL ME, TYRAK, WHAT CAN A HANDFUL OF EXHAUSTED SOLDIERS DO ABOUT IT IF OUR ENTIRE ARMIES FAILED?
MERANNO, IN YOUR OLD AGE, YOU FORGET...
...THEY INVADED US WITH THE VERY WEAPON WHICH COULD LEAD TO THEIR DESTRUCTION!
THEY WERE ALL FIGHTING OVER THAT SUBMARINE. WHY?
LET US LAUNCH A COMMUNICATIONS PROBE AND FIND OUT, SHALL WE?
BLOOORP!

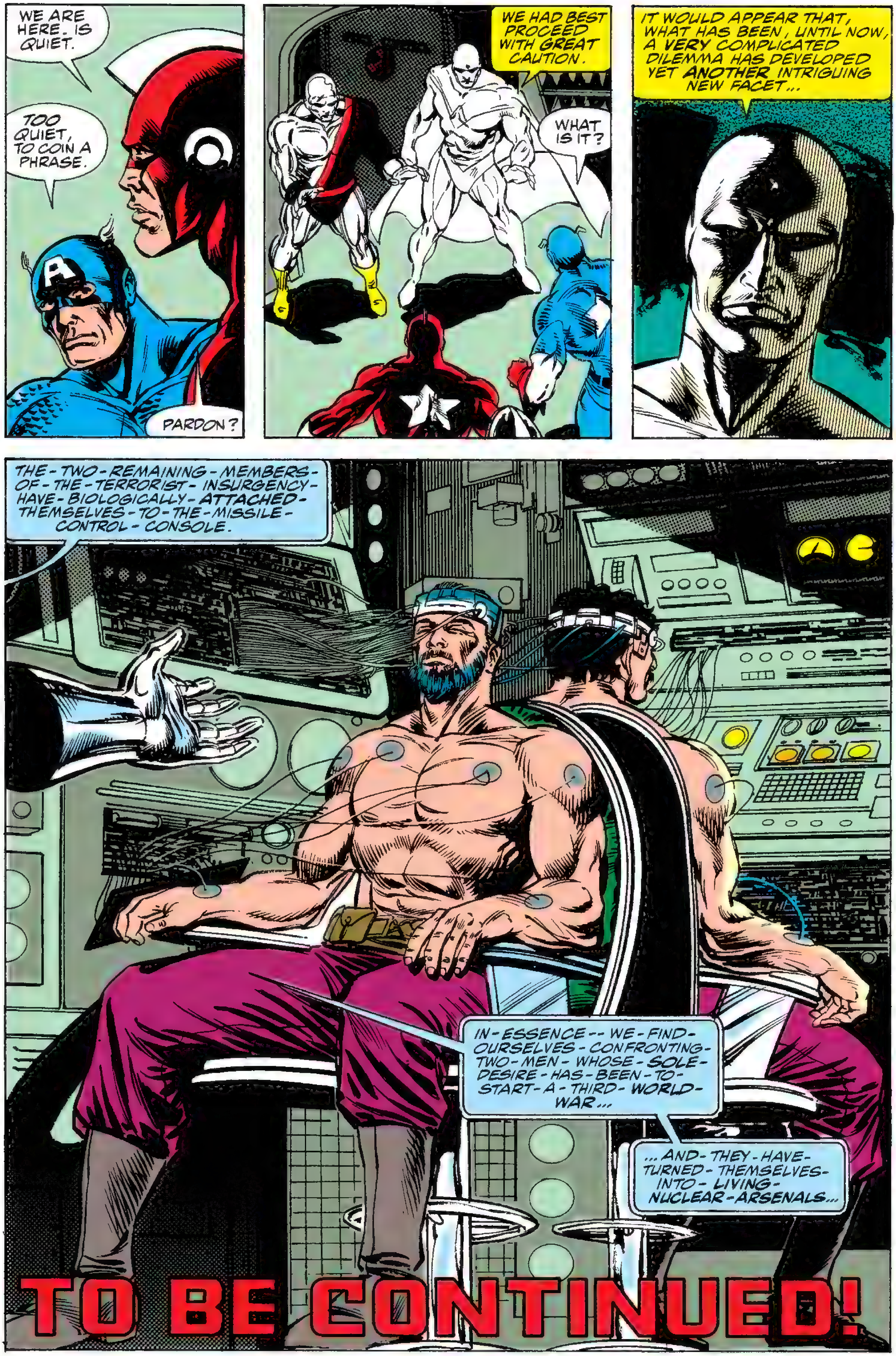

FRUMM
SPLOOSH
THE -SQRKK- SITUATI -SKRRK- HAS NOT -SKRK-
-SKRRK- IMPROVED AS THE HIJACKED BRITISH NUCLEAR SUBMARINE, WATERWIND REMAINS--
--IN DRYDOCK IN ST. JOHN'S--
IT IS AS TYRAK THOUGHT-- THE VESSEL WAS STOLEN AND IS BERTHED IN NEWFOUNDLAND--
LET US GO CRUSH THEM !!
NO, ORKA, THIS IS NOT ABOUT CRUSHING.
IT'S NOT?
NO... IT IS ABOUT HELPING THEM CRUSH THEMSELVES!
WE WILL PLAY THE GAME OF THE SURFACE NATIONS!
WE WILL CAUSE THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS ON THAT VESSEL TO DETONATE WHILE IT IS STILL ON THE SURFACE!
ONWARD TO A GLORIOUS VICTORY!


THE BAY OF PLACENTIA. TEN HOURS, TWENTY MINUTES AND COUNTING...
‹ SURE, YOU STAND GUARD, KURYESTAN... ›
‹ ...YOU GO OUT THERE WITH ONE RIFLE AND HOLD OFF A DOZEN SUPER HUMANS! ›
‹ SO NERVOUS I COULD-- ›
CHTO?
‹ PARDON ME, SON... ›
‹ BUT COULD YOU DIRECT ME TOWARD THE CLOSEST UNCONSCIOUS MAN? ›
‹ OH, NEVER MIND... I JUST FOUND HIM. ›
YOU SPEAK RUSSIAN?
WITH MORE ELOQUENCE THAN YOU, I MIGHT ADD.
THEY CAN'T ONLY HAVE ONE GUARD.
IT-IS-NOT-UNFEASIBLE-TO-BELIEVE-THEY-DO-NOT-HAVE-THE-NECESSARY-COMPLEMENT-TO-DEFEND-THE-EXTERIOR-OF-THE-VESSEL.
REMEMBER-THEY-HAD-NOT-ANTICIPATED-A-DRYDOCK-SITUATION. ALSO-NOTE-THE-HATCH-IS-LOCKED.
ONE TO GUARD THE EXTERIOR. ONE TO GUARD THE HOSTAGES. FOUR TO FIX THE SUB?
AT LEAST NOW WE KNOW WHERE THEY ARE.
DON'T FORCE THE HATCH. QUIET'S THE KEY. VIZH...
I MAY REMIND YOU, CAPTAIN, MY COMPLETE APPELLATION IS VISION. I WILL RETURN MOMENTARILY.


IT'S ALMOST AS IF HE WERE HAVING A *CONTEST* WITH VOSTOK TO SEE WHO COULD BE THE *LEAST* HUMAN! WHAT'S *REALLY* INSIDE THAT SYNTHETIC MIND OF HIS?
BELOW DECKS IS NOW DEVOID OF ACTIVITY WITHIN A THIRTY METER RADIUS.
LET'S MOVE IT OUT, PEOPLE.
KEEP IT TIGHT, KEEP IT CALM.
UHM... CAP...
COULD BE I SHOULD CUT DOWN ON THE SWEETS, EH?
QUITE HONESTLY, BOX-- I HADN'T EVEN *CONSIDERED* THIS!
DON'T SWEAT IT.
I'LL JUST *TRANSFORM* MYSELF INTO A *SUB-MERSIBLE* AND SCOPE OUT THE SITCH FROM UNDERWATER.
MAYBE I CAN FIND A WAY T'GUM UP THEIR WORKS FROM THE *OUTSIDE* WHILE YOU DO IT FROM THE *INSIDE*.
GOOD LUCK.

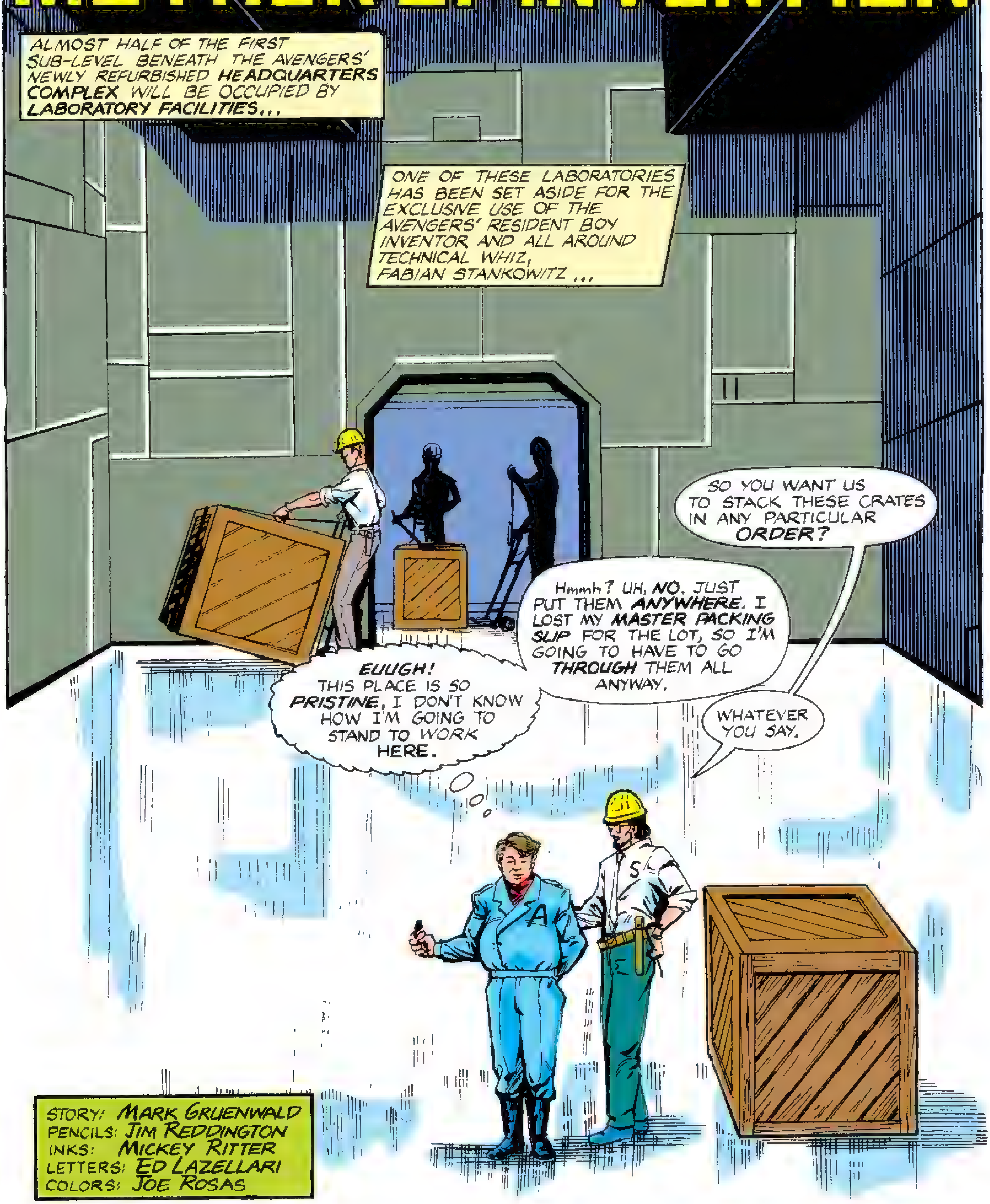

THIS ONE WAS MONITORING ALL COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS WHEN I FIRST ENTERED.
THAT'S TWO DOWN AND FOUR TO GO THEN.
WE HAVE T'MAKE SURE THE HOSTAGES ARE STILL ALIVE.
WHY WAIT, EH-- LIFE'S TOO *SHORT* FOR THAT!
AT HIS SIZE, HE CAN HANDLE THESE CORRIDORS FAR BETTER THAN WE CAN!
'AY, ALLANSON, Y' BLOODY TRAITOR--
HOW MUCH DID IT TAKE T' TURN YOU, MATE?
SOD ON IT--WHA--
NO!
PRRRT
I THINK IT'S TIME TO GIVE THESE BOYS *THEIR* CHANCE!
THOUGH I'M SURE THEY'D LIKE T' WHACK YOU *MORE* THAN *ONCE*, EH?
THOK
THREE DOWN. THE REST WILL KNOW WE'RE HERE.
PUCK-- TAKE THESE SAILORS TOPSIDE!
‹*GUNFIRE?* DID YOU HEAR THAT--?›
‹YES. WE CANNOT LEAVE NOW. WE HAVE ALMOST COMPLETED THE WORK.›


‹ NO PROBLEM, REALLY, ILLYICH. ›
‹ WE WERE ALL PLANNING TO DIE ON THIS VESSEL *ANYWAY*, RIGHT? ›
‹ WHAT *DIFFERENCE* DOES A FEW HOURS MAKE? ›
‹ *MOTHER OF GOD!* ›
RREEKK
‹ PERHAPS - RE-CREATING - YOUR - WEAPONS - OF - *WAR* - INTO - A - SYMBOL - OF - *PEACE* - WILL - SHOW - YOU - THE - ERRORS - OF - YOUR - WAYS? ›
TAK
‹ OR MAYBE NOT! ›
VISION-- VOSTOK-- YOU'RE THE FASTEST--
--*SCOUT AHEAD* --QUICKLY--THEY KNOW WE'RE HERE NOW!
LOGICALLY - I - WOULD - ANTICIPATE - THEY HAVE - GONE - TO - THE - *MISSILE - CONTROL - ROOM.*
KNOWING THEY HAD NO REAL HOPE OF ESCAPING THE DOCKING FACILITIES, THE NUCLEAR WARHEADS WOULD BE THEIR *LAST BARGAINING TOOL.*

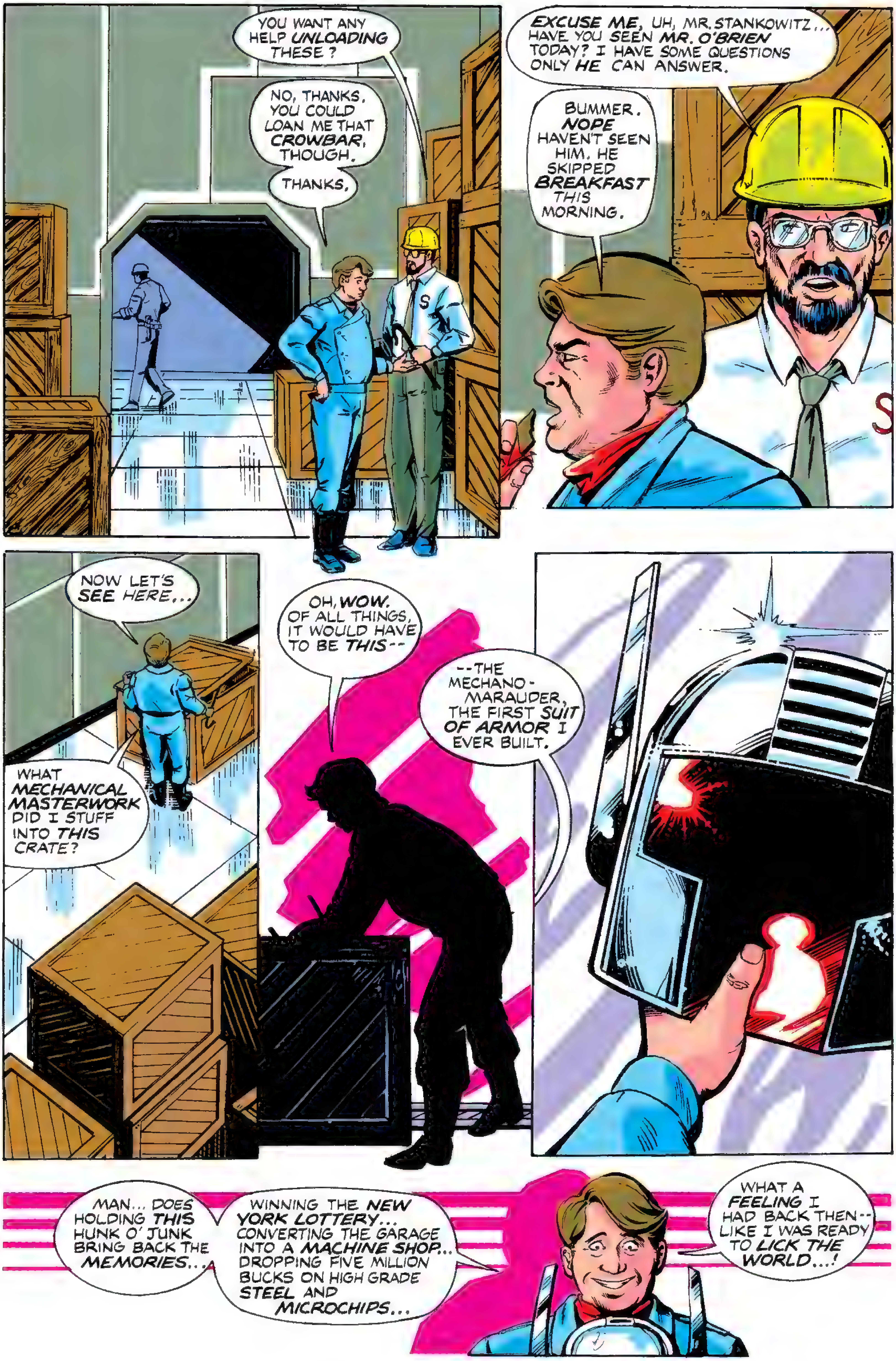

WE ARE HERE. IS QUIET.
TOO QUIET, TO COIN A PHRASE.
PARDON?
WE HAD BEST PROCEED WITH GREAT CAUTION.
WHAT IS IT?
IT WOULD APPEAR THAT, WHAT HAS BEEN, UNTIL NOW, A VERY COMPLICATED DILEMMA HAS DEVELOPED YET ANOTHER INTRIGUING NEW FACET...
THE-TWO-REMAINING-MEMBERS-OF-THE-TERRORIST-INSURGENCY-HAVE-BIOLOGICALLY-ATTACHED-THEMSELVES-TO-THE-MISSILE-CONTROL-CONSOLE.
IN-ESSENCE--WE-FIND-OURSELVES-CONFRONTING-TWO-MEN-WHOSE-SOLE-DESIRE-HAS-BEEN-TO-START-A-THIRD-WORLD-WAR...
...AND-THEY-HAVE-TURNED-THEMSELVES-INTO-LIVING-NUCLEAR-ARSENALS...
TO BE CONTINUED!

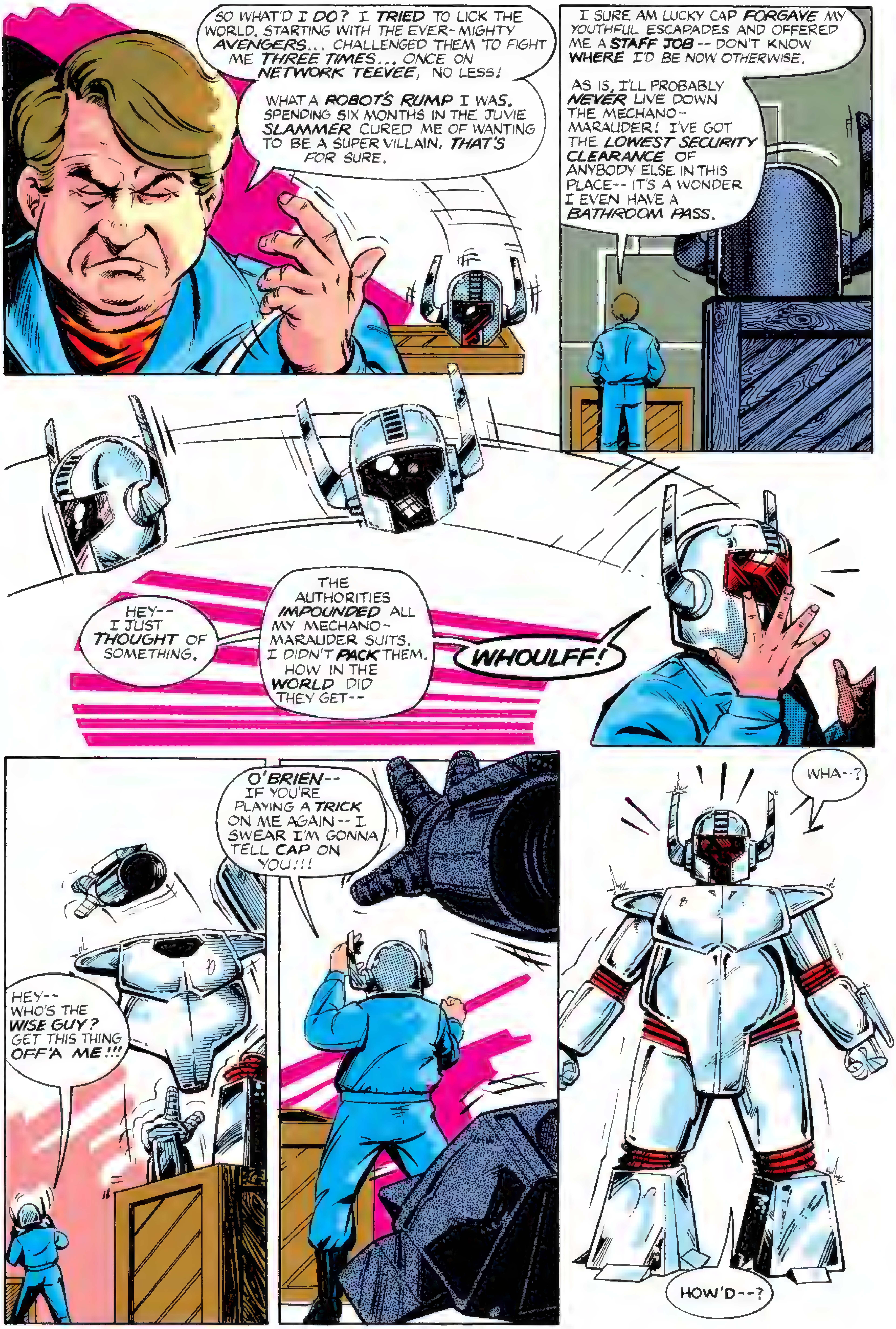
THE AVENGERS CREW

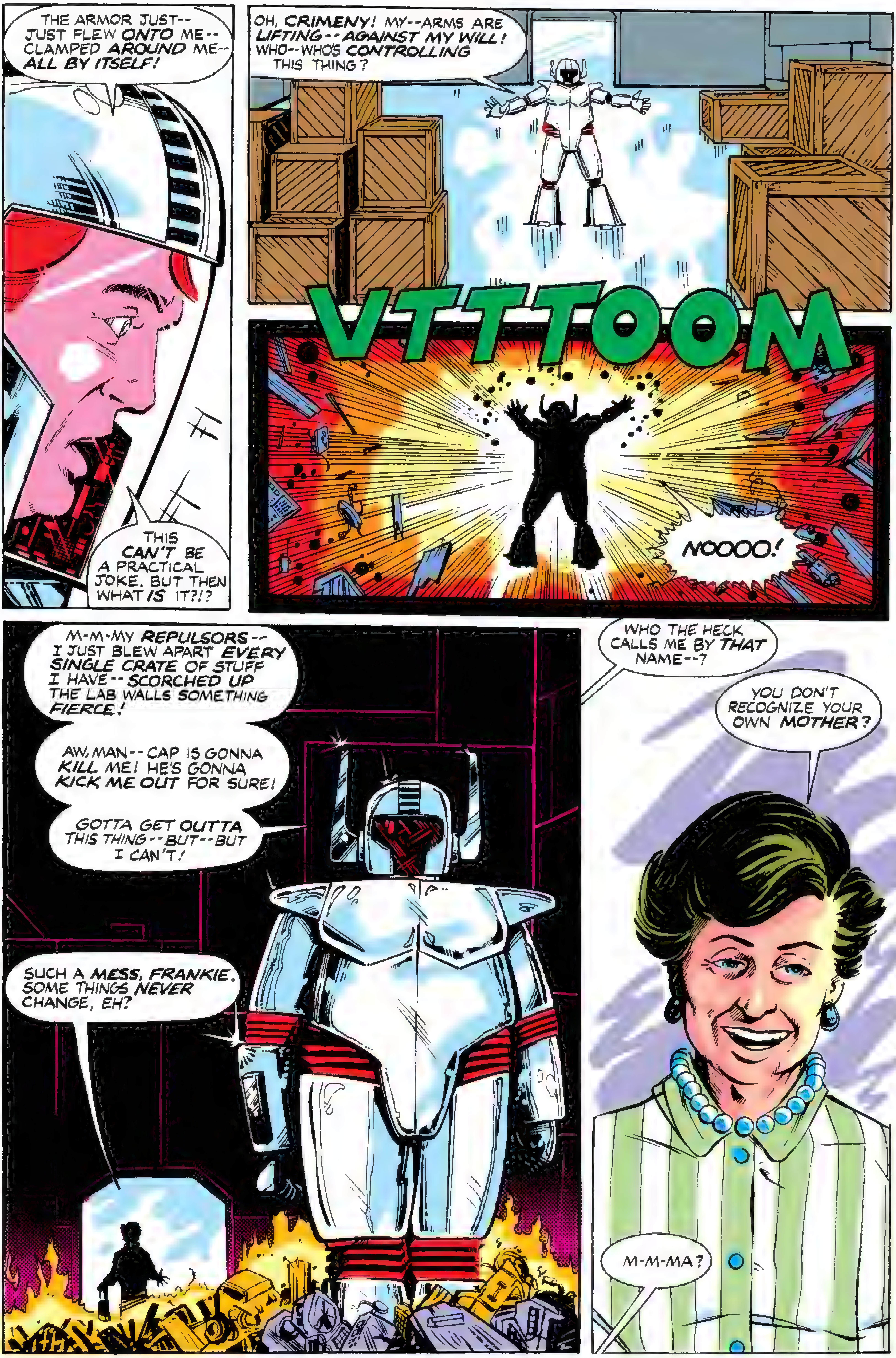
MOTHER OF INVENTION

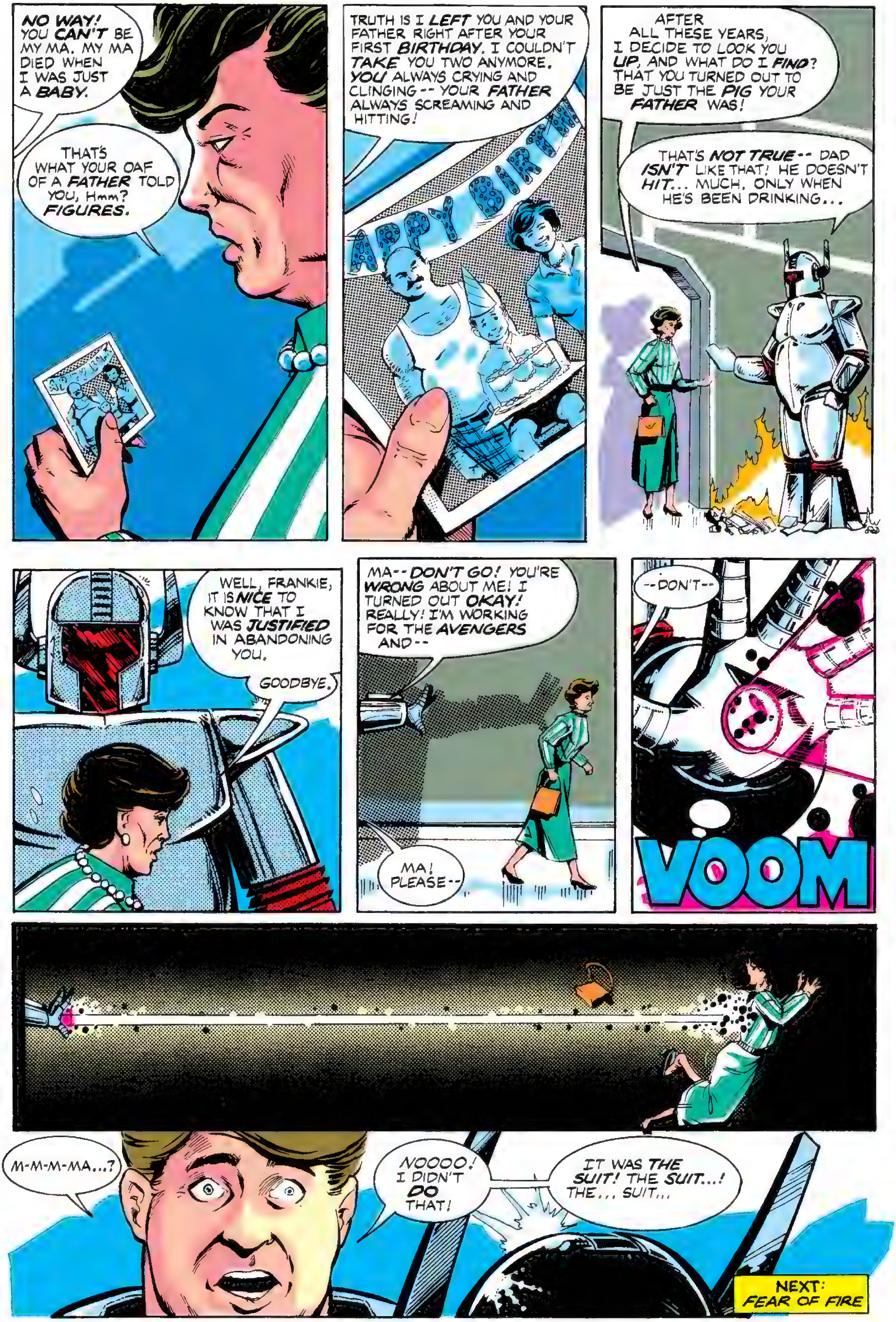

ALMOST HALF OF THE FIRST SUB-LEVEL BENEATH THE AVENGERS' NEWLY REFURBISHED **HEADQUARTERS COMPLEX** WILL BE OCCUPIED BY **LABORATORY FACILITIES...**
ONE OF THESE LABORATORIES HAS BEEN SET ASIDE FOR THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF THE AVENGERS' RESIDENT BOY INVENTOR AND ALL AROUND TECHNICAL WHIZ, FABIAN STANKOWITZ...
SO YOU WANT US TO STACK THESE CRATES IN ANY PARTICULAR **ORDER?**
Hmmh? UH, **NO.** JUST PUT THEM **ANYWHERE.** I LOST MY **MASTER PACKING SLIP** FOR THE LOT, SO I'M GOING TO HAVE TO GO **THROUGH** THEM ALL ANYWAY.
EUUGH! THIS PLACE IS SO **PRISTINE**, I DON'T KNOW HOW I'M GOING TO STAND TO WORK HERE.
WHATEVER YOU SAY.
A
S

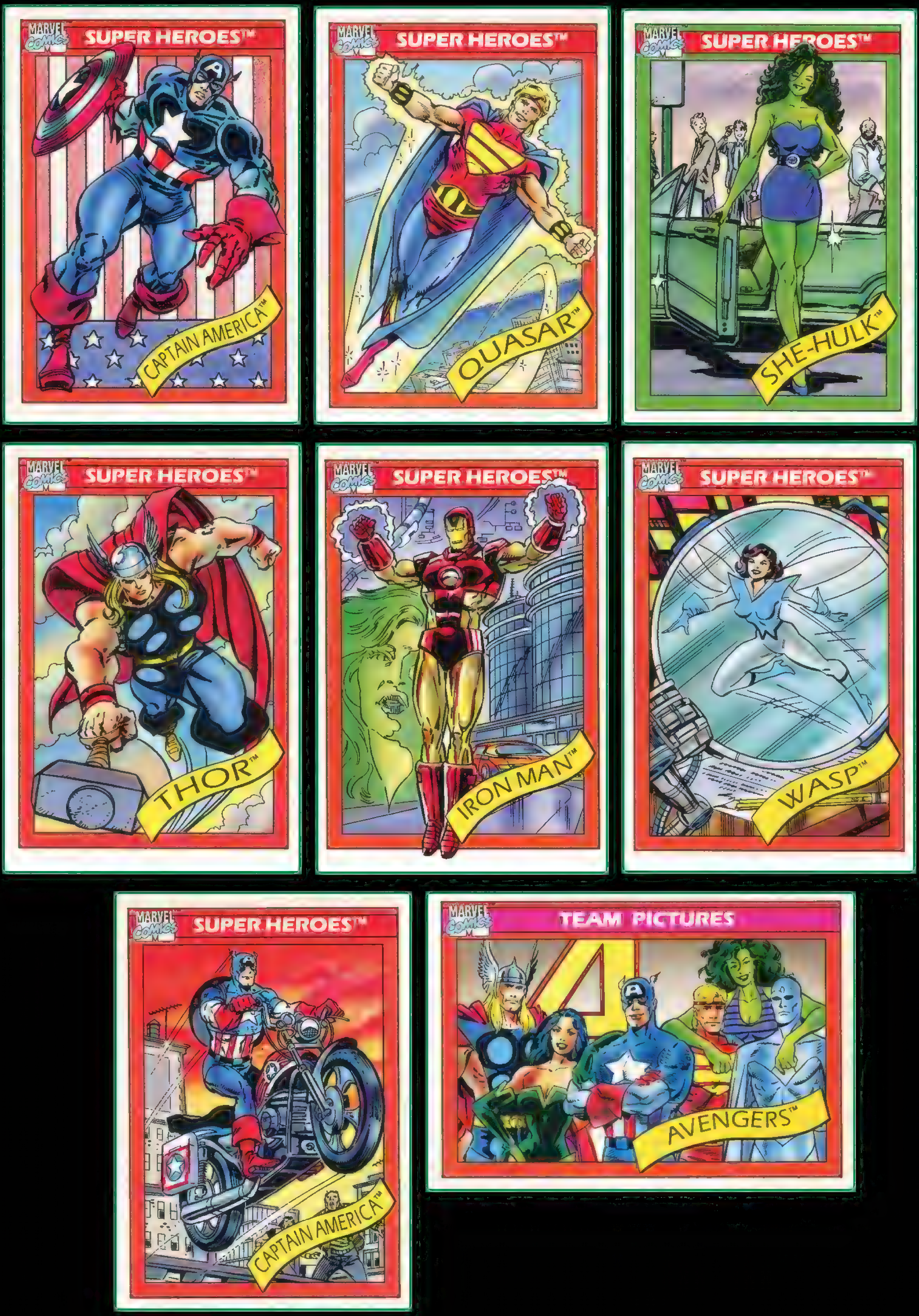
STORY: MARK GRUENWALD
PENCILS: JIM REDDINGTON
INKS: MICKEY RITTER
LETTERS: ED LAZELLARI
COLORS: JOE ROSAS


YOU WANT ANY HELP UNLOADING THESE?
NO, THANKS. YOU COULD LOAN ME THAT CROWBAR, THOUGH.
THANKS.
EXCUSE ME, UH, MR. STANKOWITZ... HAVE YOU SEEN MR. O'BRIEN TODAY? I HAVE SOME QUESTIONS ONLY HE CAN ANSWER.
BUMMER. NOPE HAVEN'T SEEN HIM. HE SKIPPED BREAKFAST THIS MORNING.
S
NOW LET'S SEE HERE...
WHAT MECHANICAL MASTERWORK DID I STUFF INTO THIS CRATE?
OH, WOW. OF ALL THINGS, IT WOULD HAVE TO BE THIS--
--THE MECHANO-MARAUDER, THE FIRST SUIT OF ARMOR I EVER BUILT.
MAN... DOES HOLDING THIS HUNK O' JUNK BRING BACK THE MEMORIES...
WINNING THE NEW YORK LOTTERY... CONVERTING THE GARAGE INTO A MACHINE SHOP... DROPPING FIVE MILLION BUCKS ON HIGH GRADE STEEL AND MICROCHIPS...
WHAT A FEELING I HAD BACK THEN--LIKE I WAS READY TO LICK THE WORLD...!


SO WHAT'D I DO? I TRIED TO LICK THE WORLD, STARTING WITH THE EVER-MIGHTY AVENGERS... CHALLENGED THEM TO FIGHT ME THREE TIMES... ONCE ON NETWORK TEEVEE, NO LESS!
WHAT A ROBOT'S RUMP I WAS. SPENDING SIX MONTHS IN THE JUVIE SLAMMER CURED ME OF WANTING TO BE A SUPER VILLAIN, THAT'S FOR SURE.
I SURE AM LUCKY CAP FORGAVE MY YOUTHFUL ESCAPADES AND OFFERED ME A STAFF JOB -- DON'T KNOW WHERE I'D BE NOW OTHERWISE.
AS IS, I'LL PROBABLY NEVER LIVE DOWN THE MECHANO-MARAUDER! I'VE GOT THE LOWEST SECURITY CLEARANCE OF ANYBODY ELSE IN THIS PLACE-- IT'S A WONDER I EVEN HAVE A BATHROOM PASS.
HEY-- I JUST THOUGHT OF SOMETHING.
THE AUTHORITIES IMPOUNDED ALL MY MECHANO-MARAUDER SUITS. I DIDN'T PACK THEM. HOW IN THE WORLD DID THEY GET--
WHOULFF!
HEY-- WHO'S THE WISE GUY? GET THIS THING OFF'A ME!!!
O'BRIEN-- IF YOU'RE PLAYING A TRICK ON ME AGAIN-- I SWEAR I'M GONNA TELL CAP ON YOU!!!
WHA--?
HOW'D--?


THE ARMOR JUST-- JUST FLEW ONTO ME-- CLAMPED AROUND ME-- ALL BY ITSELF!
THIS CAN'T BE A PRACTICAL JOKE. BUT THEN WHAT IS IT?!?
OH, CRIMENY! MY--ARMS ARE LIFTING--AGAINST MY WILL! WHO--WHO'S CONTROLLING THIS THING?
VTTTOOM
NOOOO!
M-M-MY REPULSORS-- I JUST BLEW APART EVERY SINGLE CRATE OF STUFF I HAVE--SCORCHED UP THE LAB WALLS SOMETHING FIERCE!
AW, MAN--CAP IS GONNA KILL ME! HE'S GONNA KICK ME OUT FOR SURE!
GOTTA GET OUTTA THIS THING--BUT--BUT I CAN'T!
SUCH A MESS, FRANKIE. SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE, EH?
WHO THE HECK CALLS ME BY THAT NAME--?
YOU DON'T RECOGNIZE YOUR OWN MOTHER?
M-M-MA?


NO WAY! YOU CAN'T BE MY MA. MY MA DIED WHEN I WAS JUST A BABY.
THAT'S WHAT YOUR OAF OF A FATHER TOLD YOU, Hmm? FIGURES.
TRUTH IS I LEFT YOU AND YOUR FATHER RIGHT AFTER YOUR FIRST BIRTHDAY. I COULDN'T TAKE YOU TWO ANYMORE. YOU ALWAYS CRYING AND CLINGING -- YOUR FATHER ALWAYS SCREAMING AND HITTING!
APPY BIRTH
AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, I DECIDE TO LOOK YOU UP, AND WHAT DO I FIND? THAT YOU TURNED OUT TO BE JUST THE PIG YOUR FATHER WAS!
THAT'S NOT TRUE -- DAD ISN'T LIKE THAT! HE DOESN'T HIT... MUCH. ONLY WHEN HE'S BEEN DRINKING...
WELL, FRANKIE, IT IS NICE TO KNOW THAT I WAS JUSTIFIED IN ABANDONING YOU.
GOODBYE.
MA -- DON'T GO! YOU'RE WRONG ABOUT ME! I TURNED OUT OKAY! REALLY! I'M WORKING FOR THE AVENGERS AND --
MA! PLEASE --
-- DON'T --
VOOM
M-M-M-MA...?
NOOOO! I DIDN'T DO THAT!
IT WAS THE SUIT! THE SUIT...! THE... SUIT...
NEXT: FEAR OF FIRE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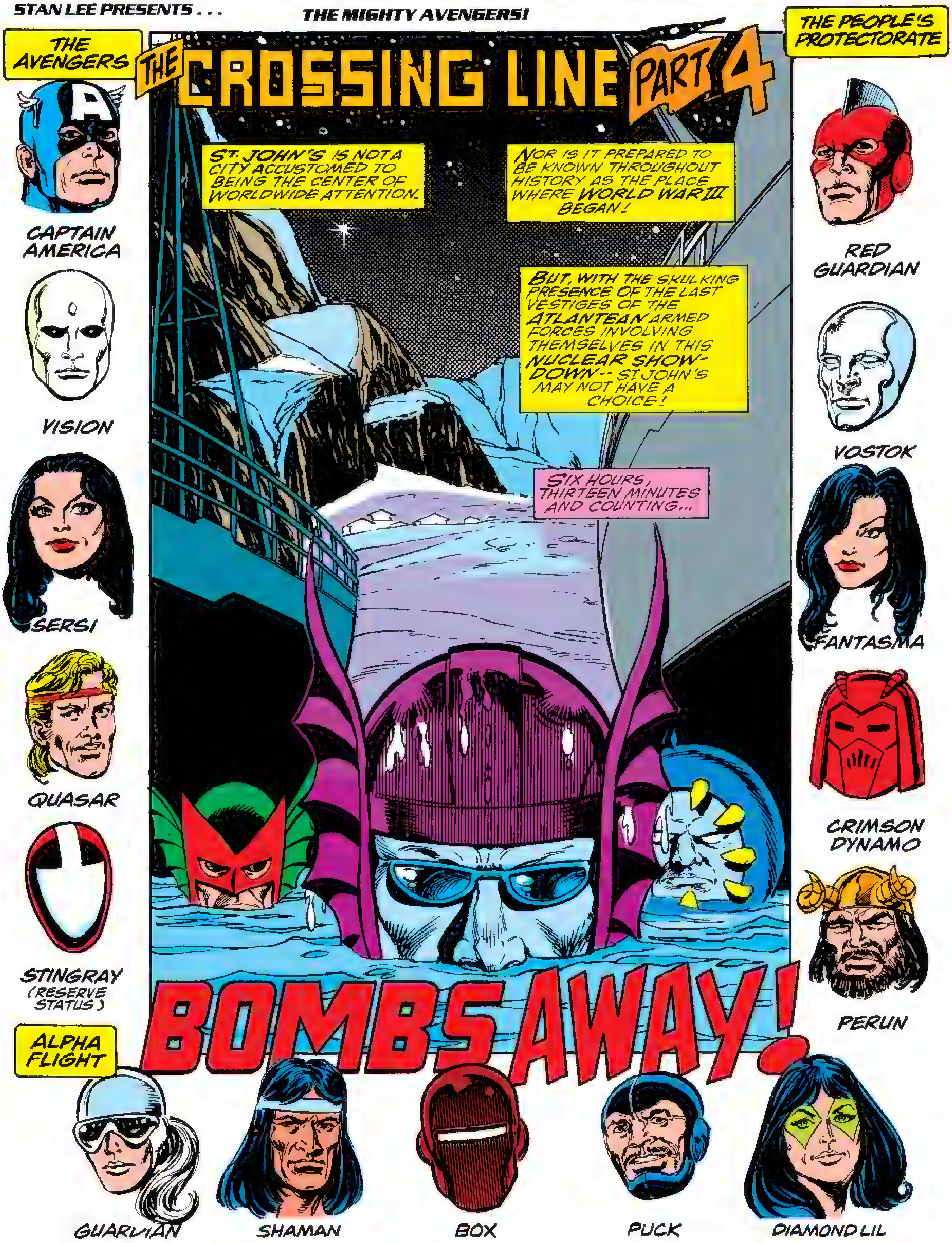
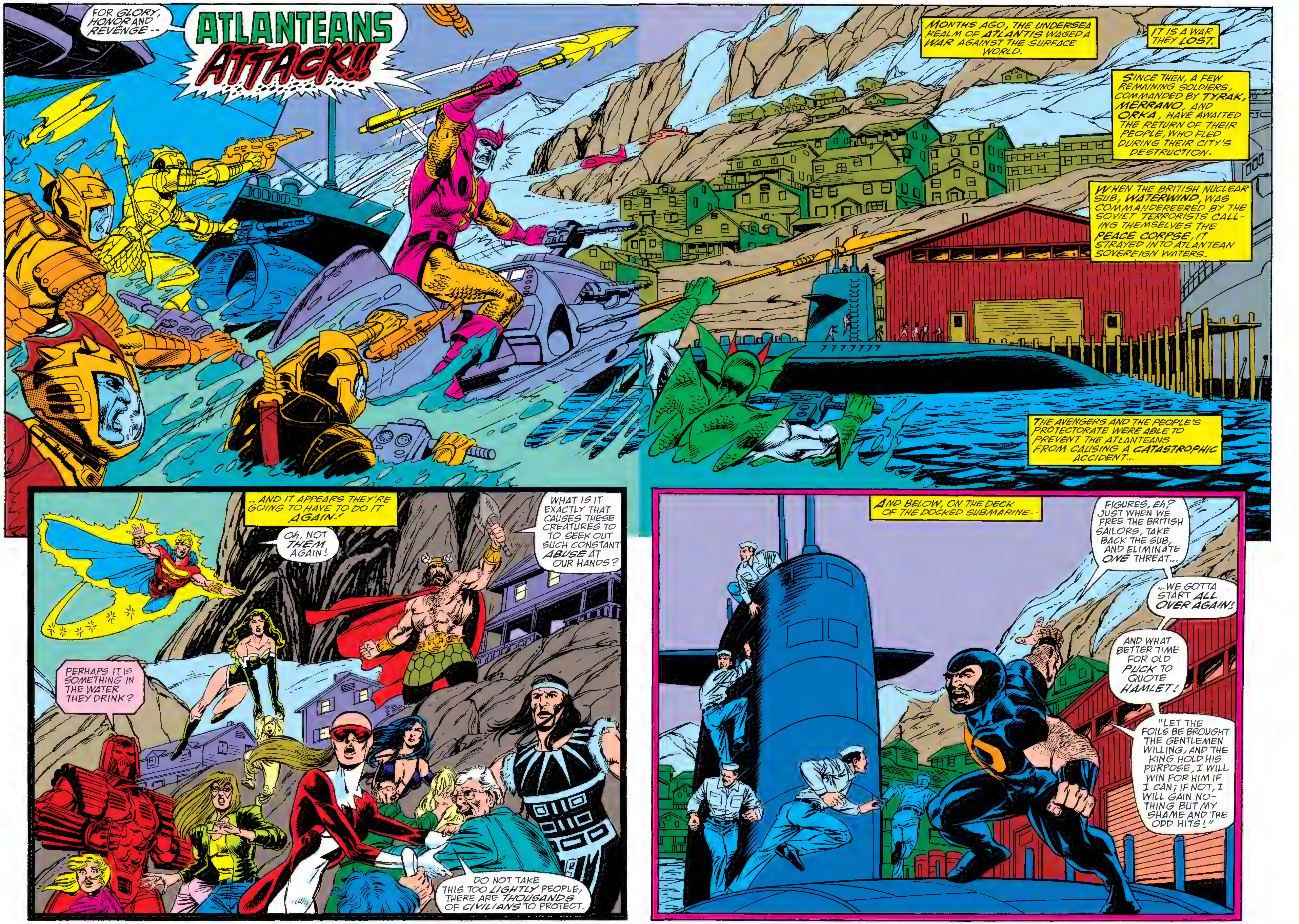
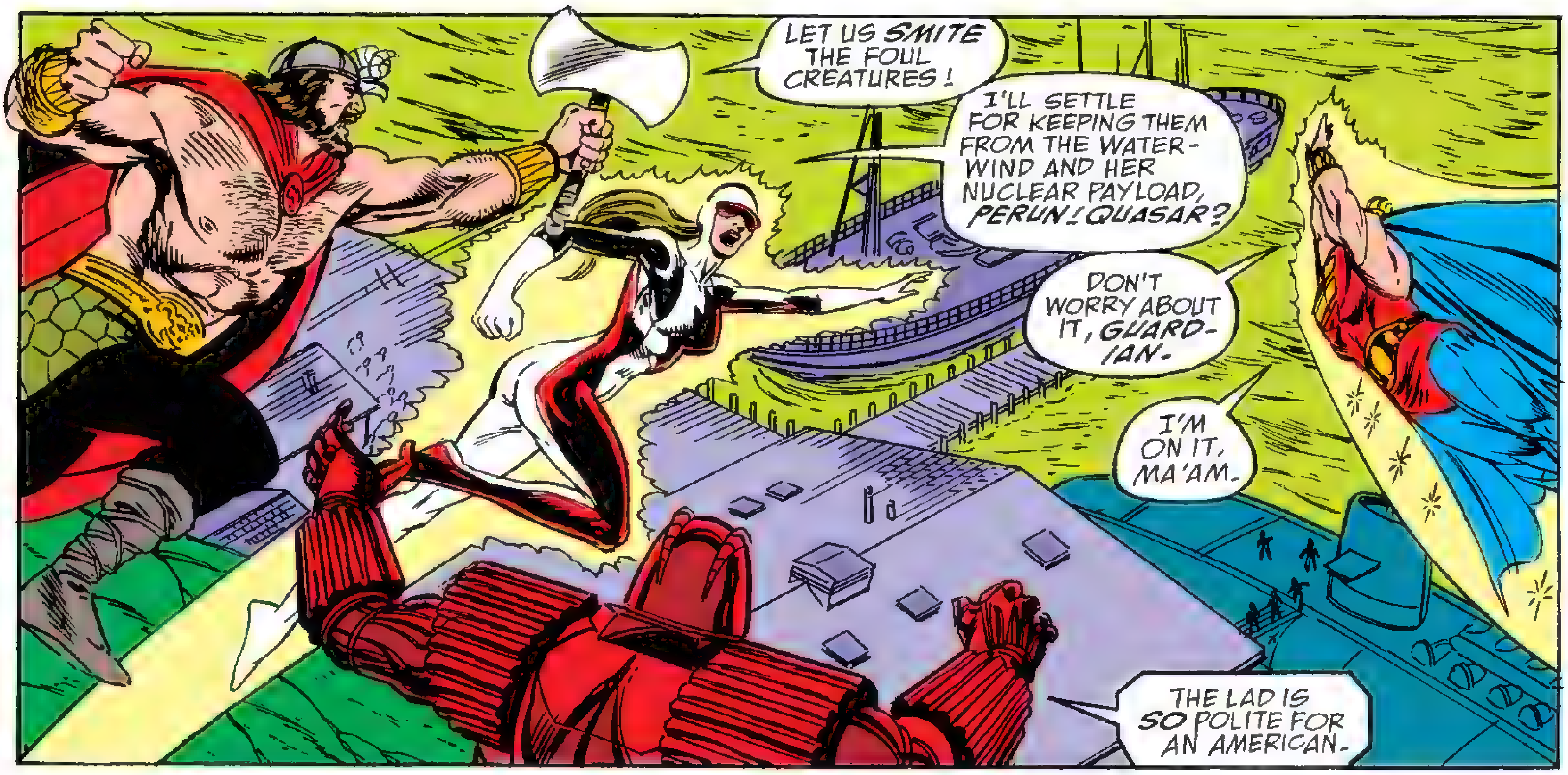
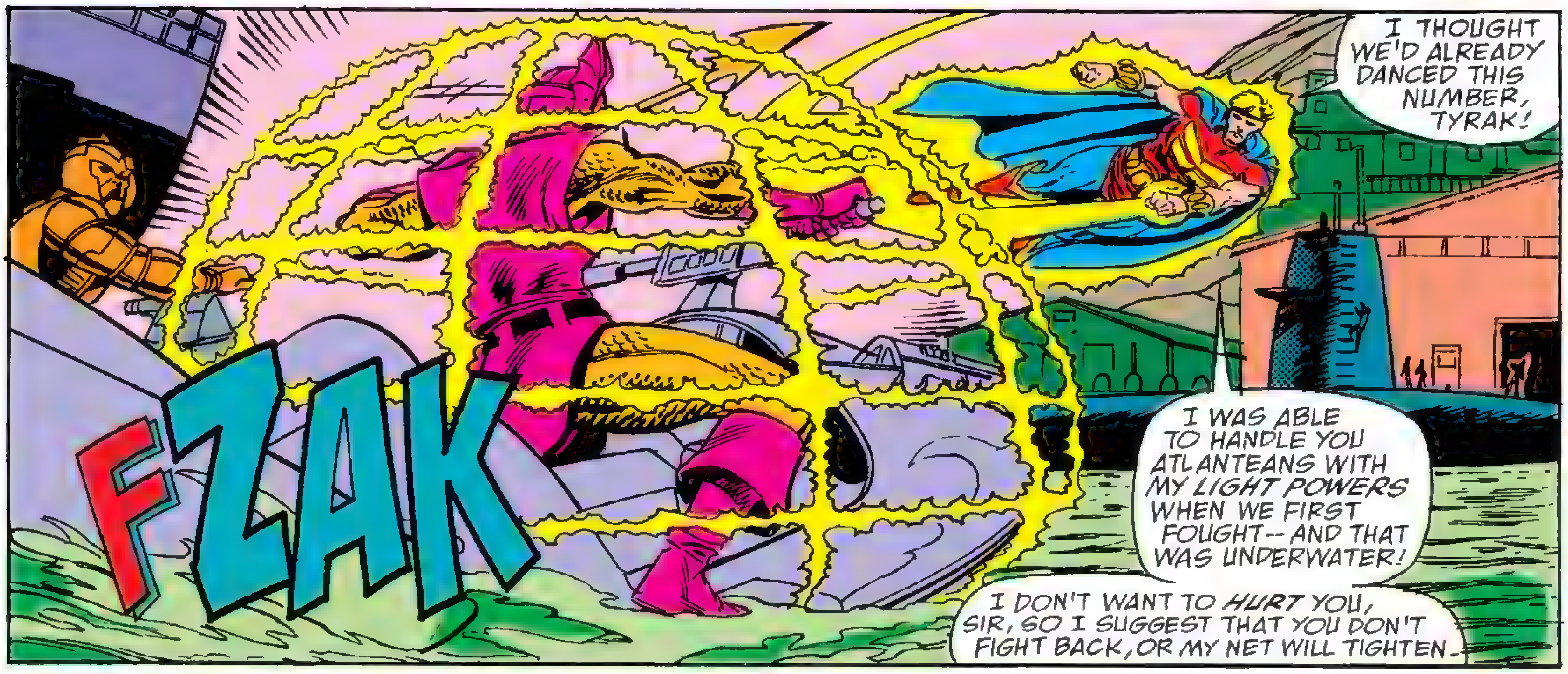
TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND!
STAN LEE PRESENTS . . . THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

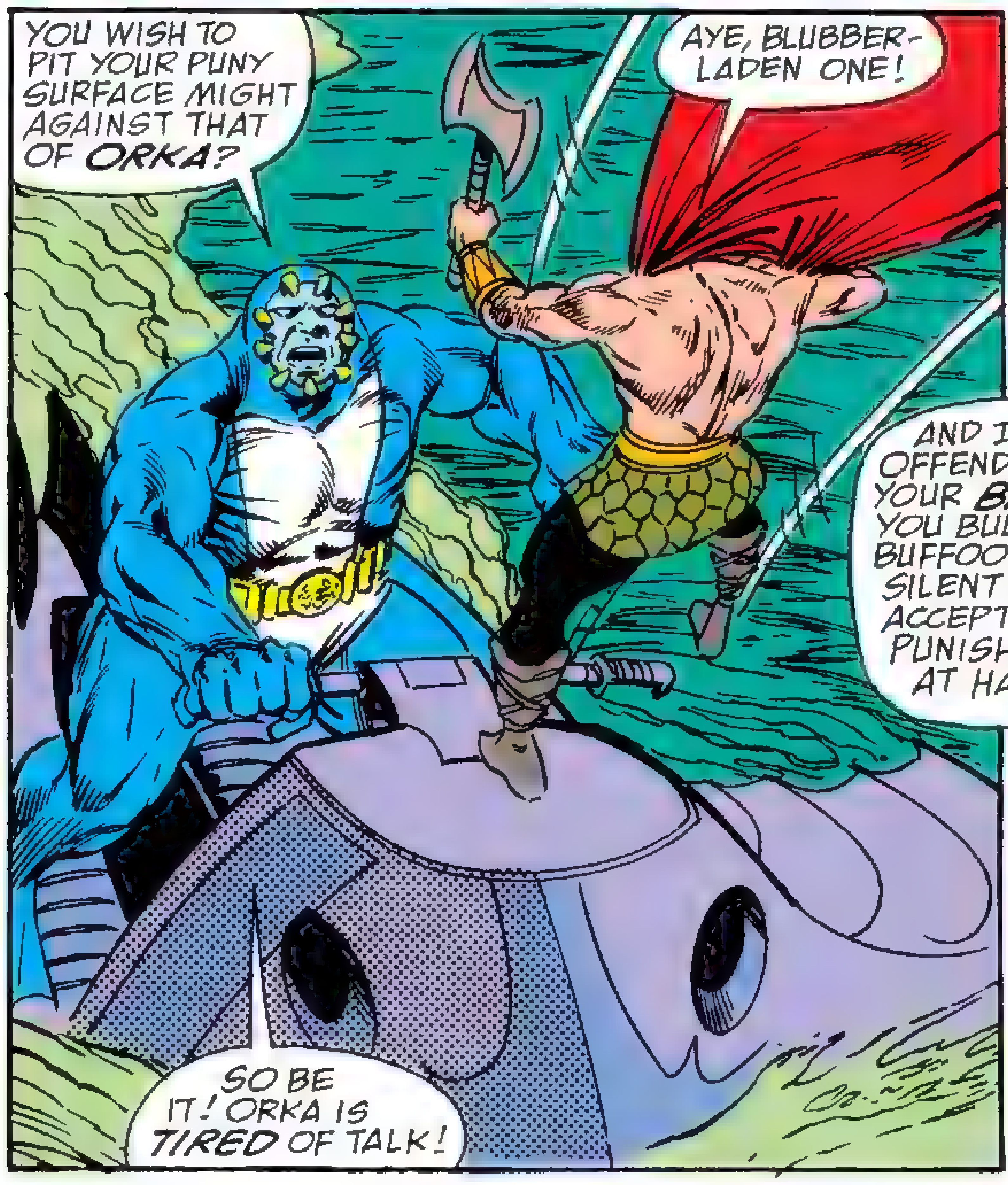

THE AVENGERS
THE CROSSING LINE PART 4
THE PEOPLE'S PROTECTORATE
ST. JOHN'S IS NOT A CITY ACCUSTOMED TO BEING THE CENTER OF WORLDWIDE ATTENTION.
NOR IS IT PREPARED TO BE KNOWN THROUGHOUT HISTORY AS THE PLACE WHERE WORLD WAR III BEGAN!
BUT, WITH THE SKULKING PRESENCE OF THE LAST VESTIGES OF THE ATLANTEAN ARMED FORCES INVOLVING THEMSELVES IN THIS NUCLEAR SHOW-DOWN -- ST. JOHN'S MAY NOT HAVE A CHOICE!
SIX HOURS, THIRTEEN MINUTES AND COUNTING...
BOMBS AWAY!
CAPTAIN AMERICA
VISION
SERSI
QUASAR
STINGRAY (RESERVE STATUS)
RED GUARDIAN
VOSTOK
FANTASMA
CRIMSON DYNAMO
PERUN
ALPHA FLIGHT
GUARDIAN
SHAMAN
BOX
PUCK
DIAMOND LIL

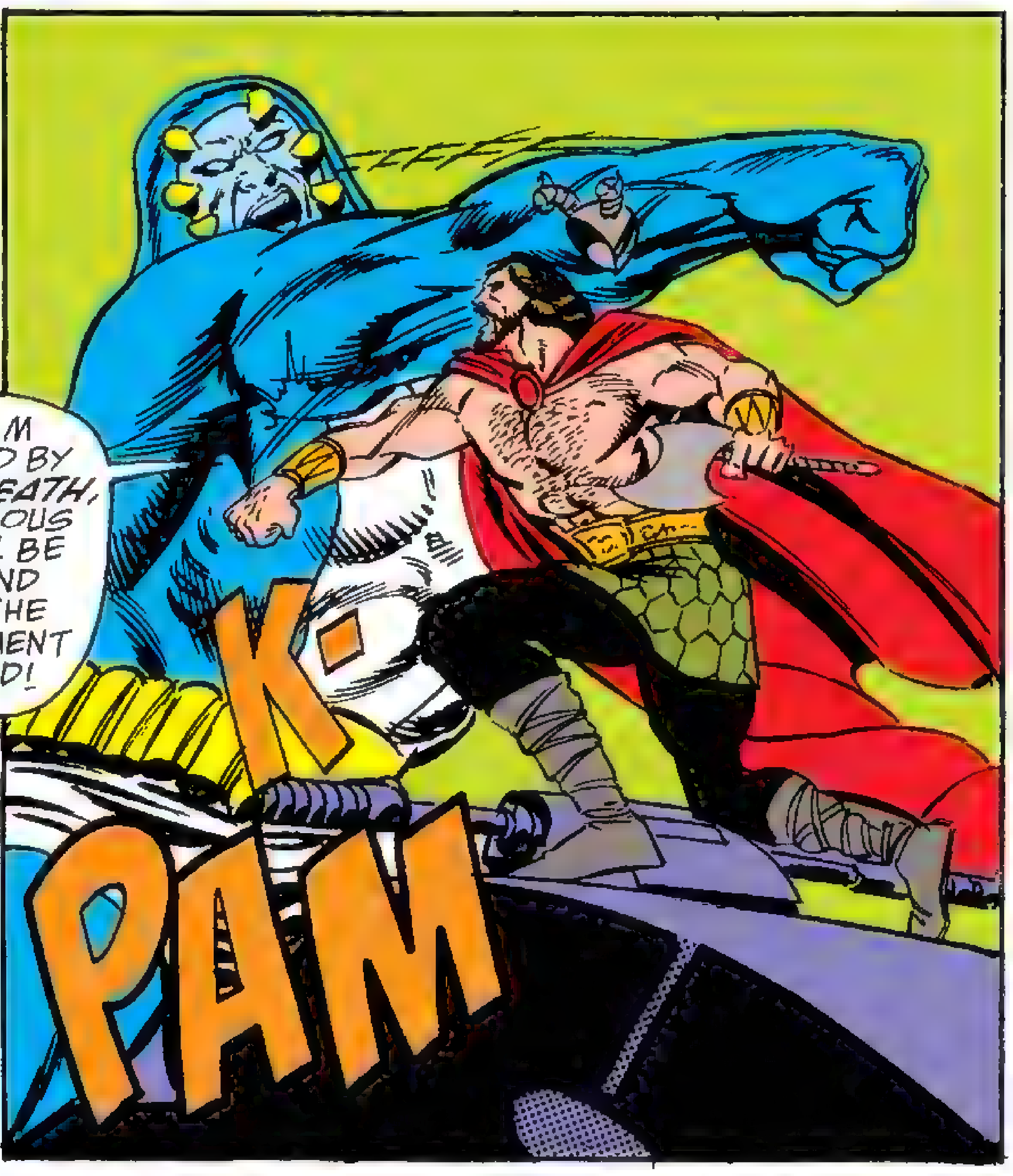
A NICIEZA / RYAN / IVY / MORELLI / WITTERSTAETTER / MACKIE / DeFALCO PRODUCTION

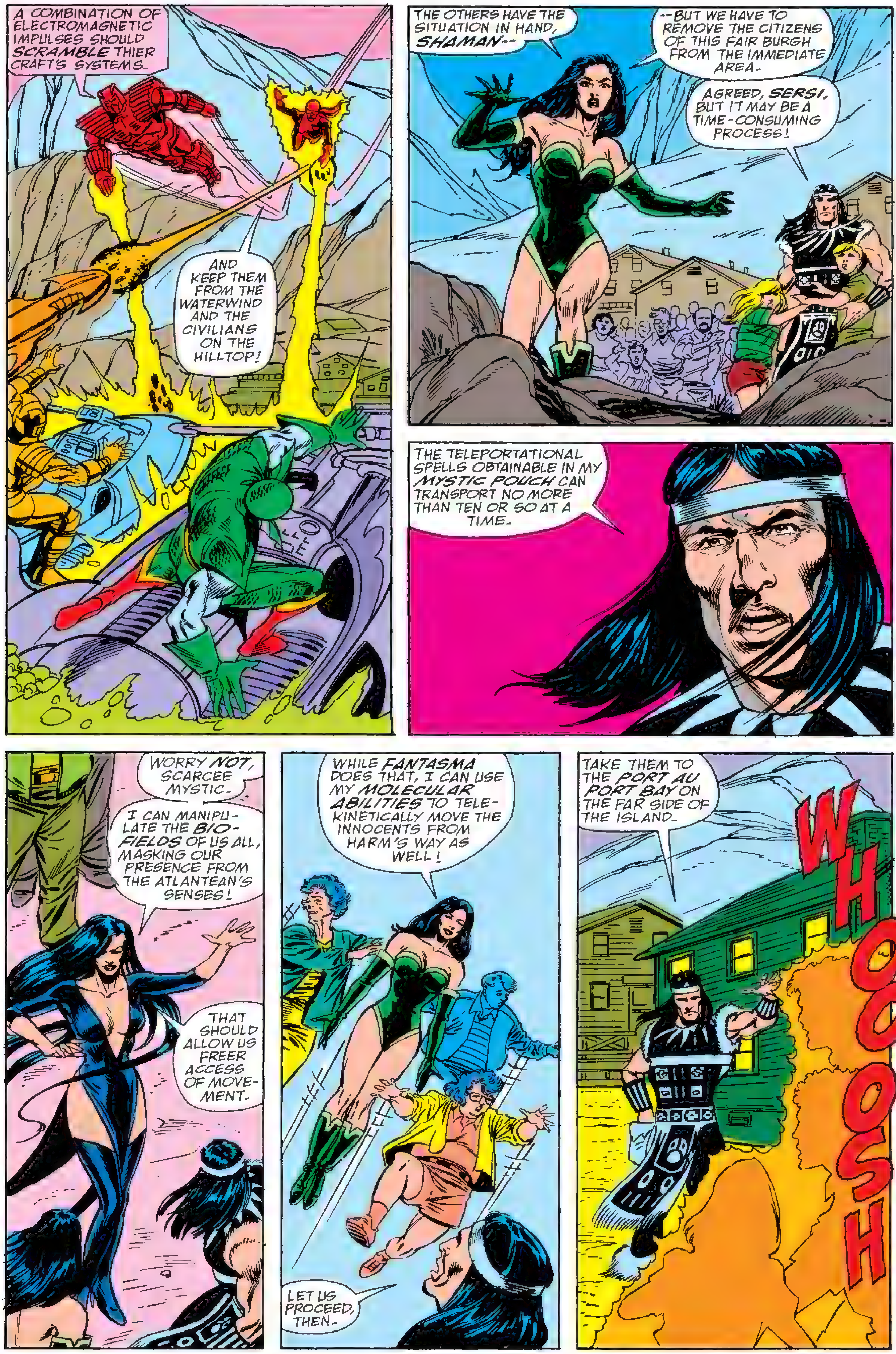

FOR GLORY, HONOR AND REVENGE--
ATLANTEANS ATTACK!!
MONTHS AGO, THE UNDERSEA REALM OF ATLANTIS WAGED A WAR AGAINST THE SURFACE WORLD.
IT IS A WAR THEY LOST.
SINCE THEN, A FEW REMAINING SOLDIERS, COMMANDED BY TYRAK, MERRANO, AND ORKA, HAVE AWAITED THE RETURN OF THEIR PEOPLE, WHO FLED DURING THEIR CITY'S DESTRUCTION.
WHEN THE BRITISH NUCLEAR SUB, WATERWIND, WAS COMMANDEEREED BY THE SOVIET TERRORISTS CALLING THEMSELVES THE PEACE CORPSE, IT STRAYED INTO ATLANTEAN SOVEREIGN WATERS.
THE AVENGERS AND THE PEOPLE'S PROTECTORATE WERE ABLE TO PREVENT THE ATLANTEANS FROM CAUSING A CATASTROPHIC ACCIDENT...
...AND IT APPEARS THEY'RE GOING TO HAVE TO DO IT AGAIN!
Oh, NOT THEM AGAIN!
WHAT IS IT EXACTLY THAT CAUSES THESE CREATURES TO TO SEEK OUT SUCH CONSTANT ABUSE AT OUR HANDS?
PERHAPS IT IS SOMETHING IN THE WATER THEY DRINK?
DO NOT TAKE THIS TOO LIGHTLY PEOPLE, THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF CIVILIANS TO PROTECT.
AND BELOW, ON THE DECK OF THE DOCKED SUBMARINE--
FIGURES, EH? JUST WHEN WE FREE THE BRITISH SAILORS, TAKE BACK THE SUB, AND ELIMINATE ONE THREAT...
...WE GOTTA START ALL OVER AGAIN!
AND WHAT BETTER TIME FOR OLD PUCK TO QUOTE HAMLET!
"LET THE FOILS BE BROUGHT THE GENTLEMEN WILLING, AND THE KING HOLD HIS PURPOSE, I WILL WIN FOR HIM IF I CAN; IF NOT, I WILL GAIN NOTHING BUT MY SHAME AND THE ODD HITS!"

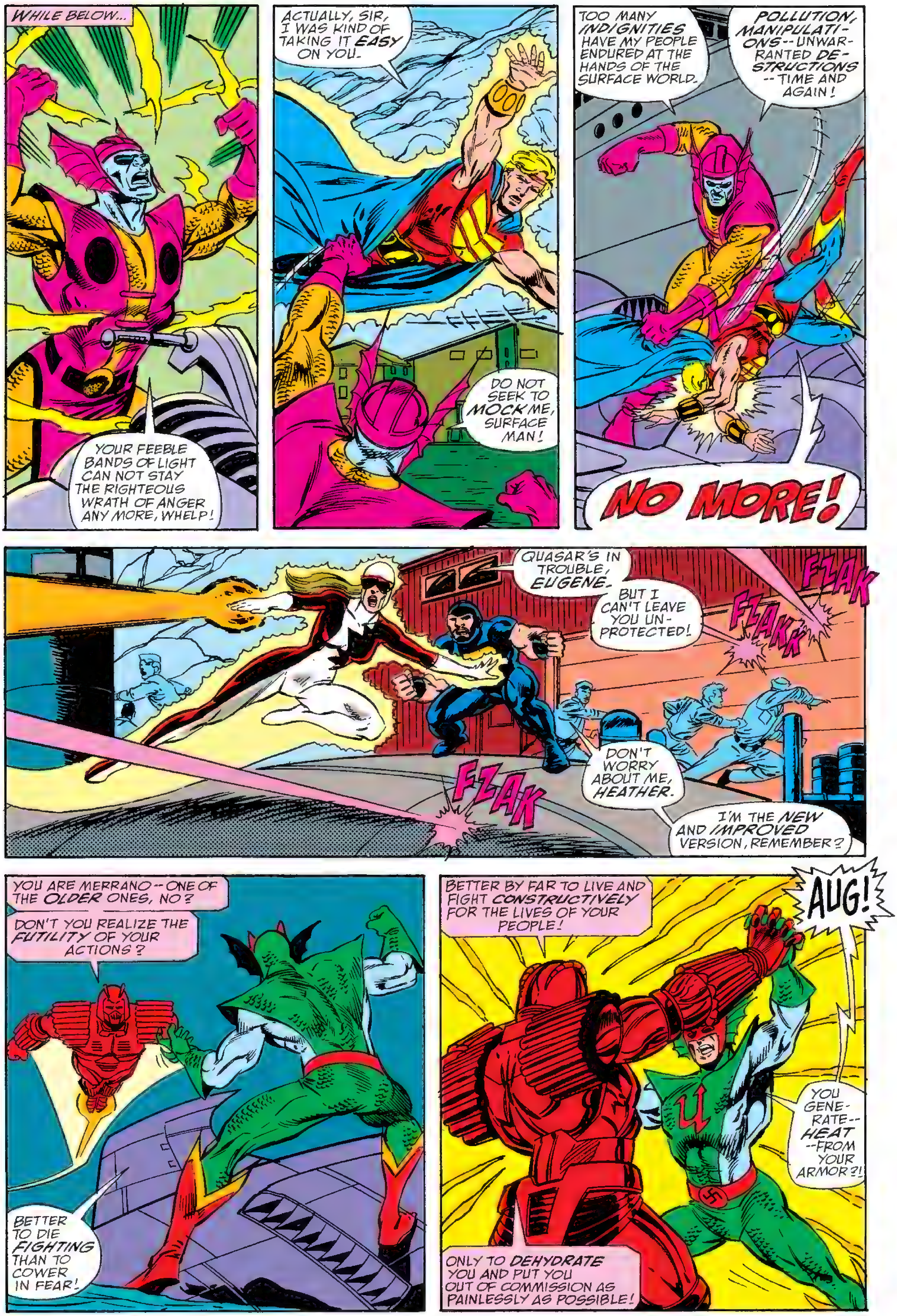

LET US *SMITE* THE FOUL CREATURES!
I'LL SETTLE FOR KEEPING THEM FROM THE WATERWIND AND HER NUCLEAR PAYLOAD, *PERUN! QUASAR?*
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, *GUARDIAN*.
I'M ON IT, MA'AM.
THE LAD IS *SO* POLITE FOR AN AMERICAN.

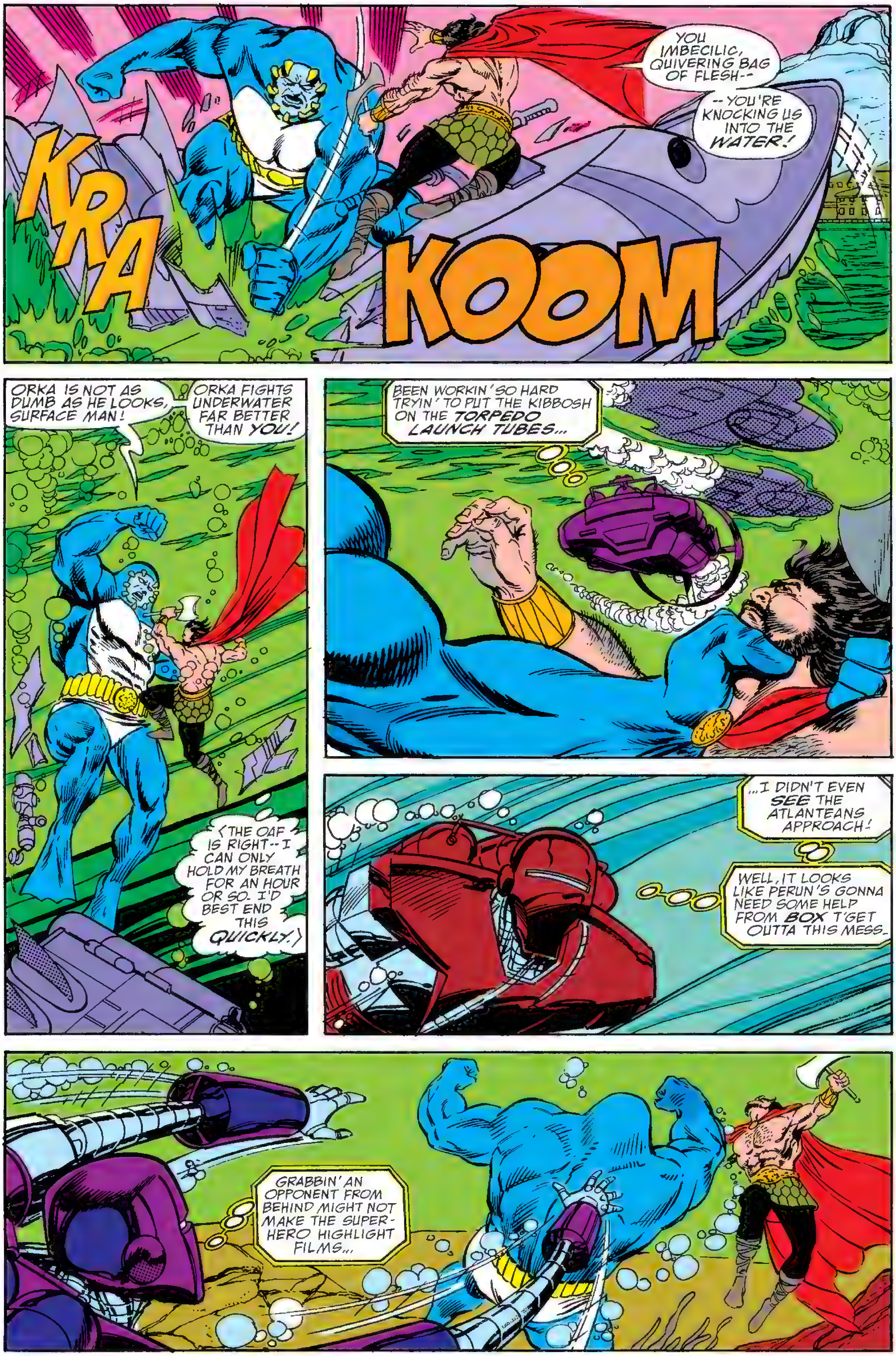

I THOUGHT WE'D ALREADY DANCED THIS NUMBER, TYRAK!
FZAK
I WAS ABLE TO HANDLE YOU ATLANTEANS WITH MY *LIGHT POWERS* WHEN WE FIRST FOUGHT-- AND THAT WAS UNDERWATER!
I DON'T WANT TO *HURT* YOU, SIR, SO I SUGGEST THAT YOU DON'T FIGHT BACK, OR MY NET WILL TIGHTEN.


YOU WISH TO PIT YOUR PUNY SURFACE MIGHT AGAINST THAT OF *ORKA?*
AYE, BLUBBER-LADEN ONE!
SO BE IT! ORKA IS *TIRED* OF TALK!

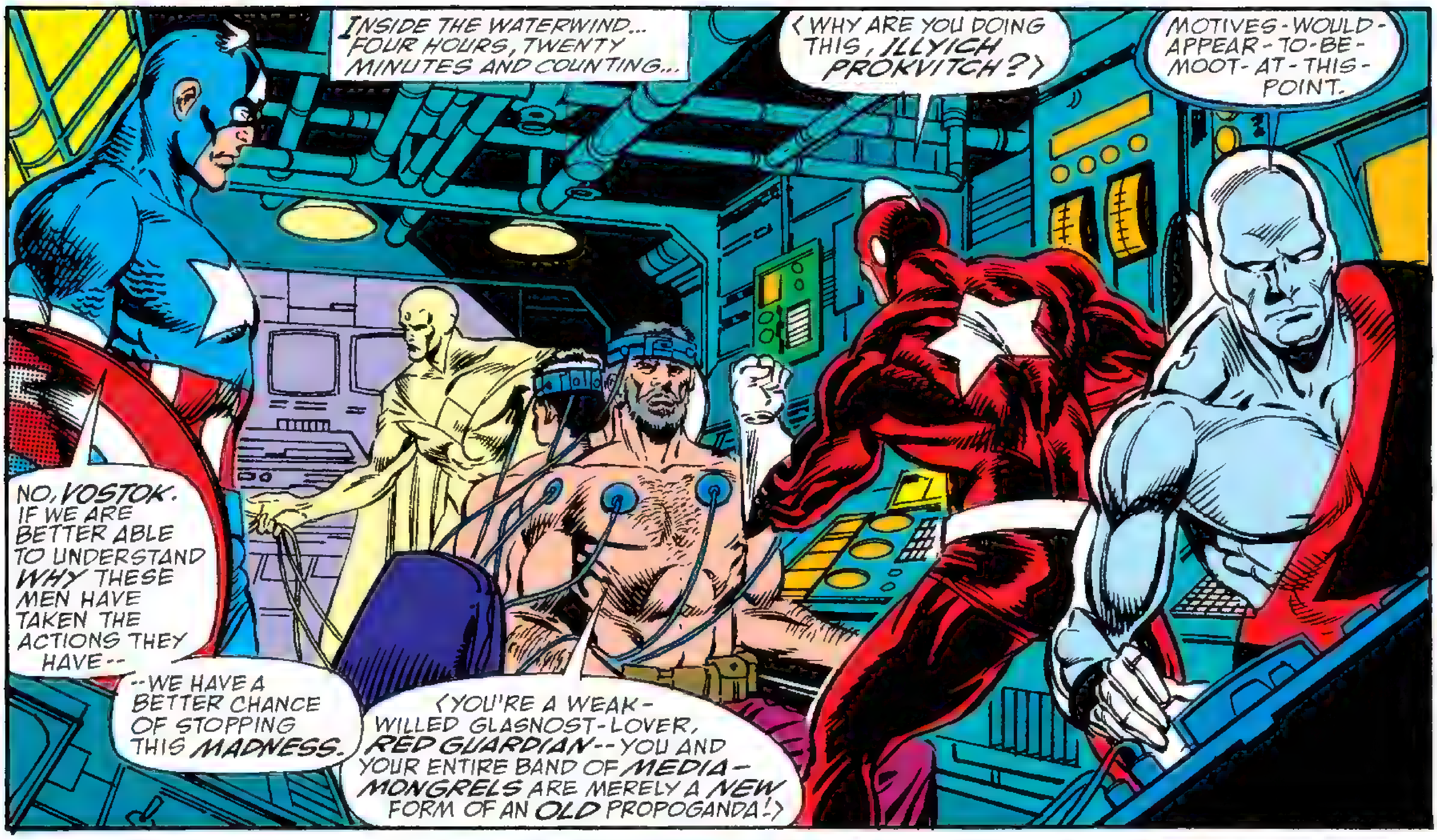

AND I AM OFFENDED BY YOUR *BREATH*, YOU BULBOUS BUFFOON! BE SILENT AND ACCEPT THE PUNISHMENT AT HAND!
K-PAM

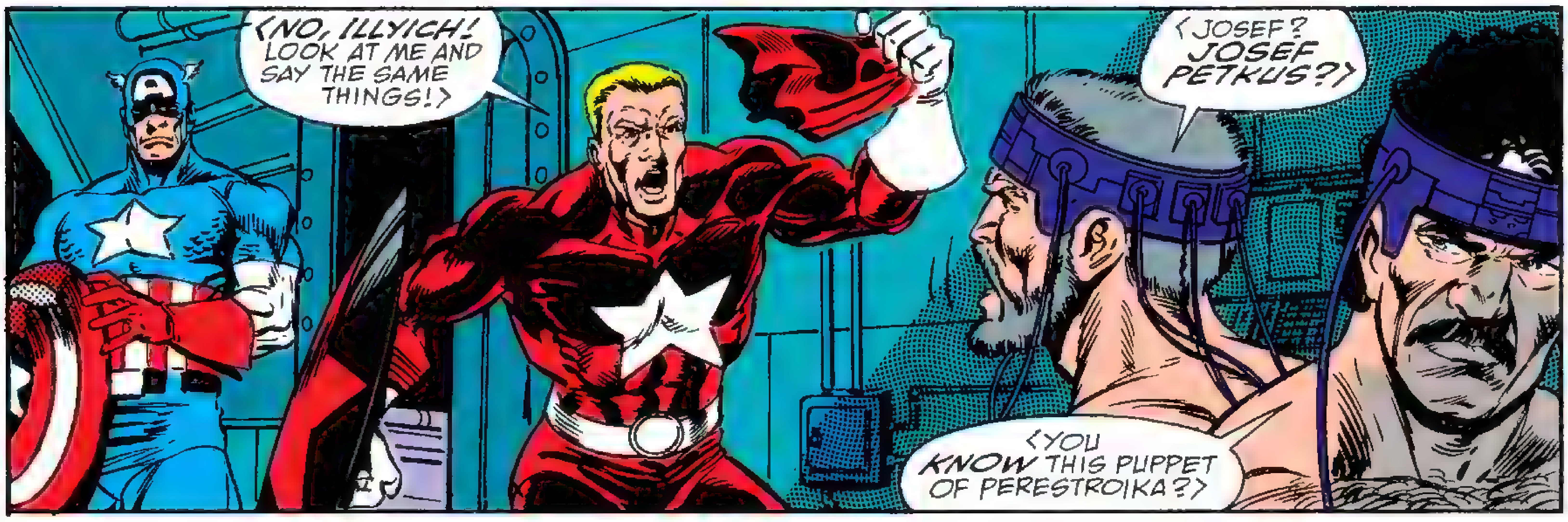

A COMBINATION OF ELECTROMAGNETIC IMPULSES SHOULD *SCRAMBLE* THIER CRAFT'S SYSTEMS.
AND KEEP THEM FROM THE WATERWIND AND THE CIVILIANS ON THE HILLTOP!
THE OTHERS HAVE THE SITUATION IN HAND, *SHAMAN*--
--BUT WE HAVE TO REMOVE THE CITIZENS OF THIS FAIR BURGH FROM THE IMMEDIATE AREA.
AGREED, *SERSI*, BUT IT MAY BE A TIME-CONSUMING PROCESS!
THE TELEPORTATIONAL SPELLS OBTAINABLE IN MY *MYSTIC POUCH* CAN TRANSPORT NO MORE THAN TEN OR SO AT A TIME.
WORRY *NOT*, SCARCEE MYSTIC.
I CAN MANIPULATE THE *BIO-FIELDS* OF US ALL, MASKING OUR PRESENCE FROM THE ATLANTEAN'S SENSES!
THAT SHOULD ALLOW US FREER ACCESS OF MOVEMENT.
WHILE *FANTASMA* DOES THAT, I CAN USE MY *MOLECULAR ABILITIES* TO TELEKINETICALLY MOVE THE INNOCENTS FROM HARM'S WAY AS WELL!
LET US PROCEED, THEN.
TAKE THEM TO THE *PORT AU PORT BAY* ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE ISLAND.
WHOOOSH

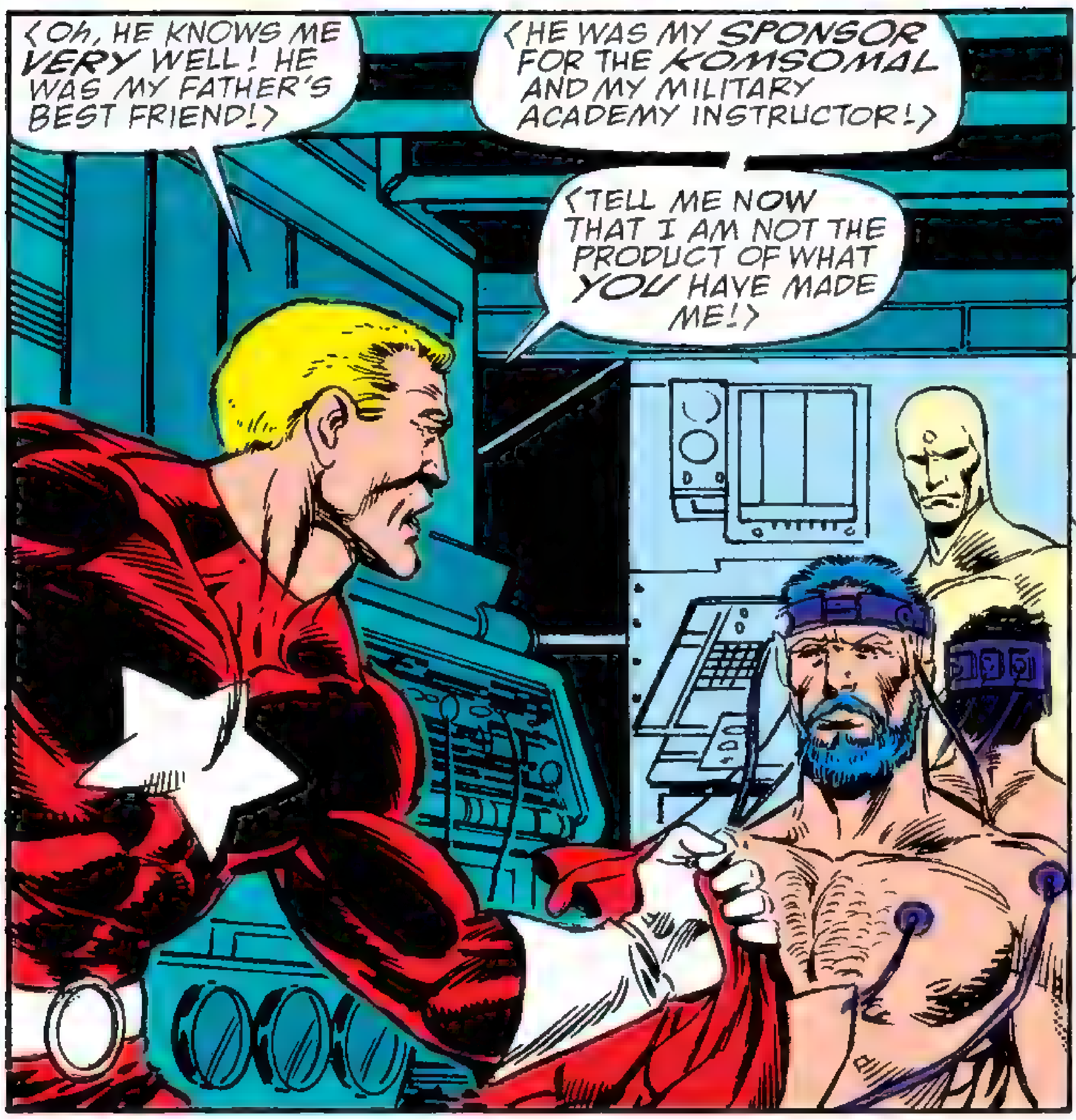

WHILE BELOW...
YOUR FEEBLE BANDS OF LIGHT CAN NOT STAY THE RIGHTEOUS WRATH OF ANGER ANY MORE, WHELP!
ACTUALLY, SIR, I WAS KIND OF TAKING IT *EASY* ON YOU.
DO NOT SEEK TO *MOCK* ME, SURFACE MAN!
TOO MANY *INDIGNITIES* HAVE MY PEOPLE ENDURED AT THE HANDS OF THE SURFACE WORLD.
POLLUTION, MANIPULATIONS--UNWARRANTED *DESTRUCTIONS*--TIME AND AGAIN!
NO MORE!
QUASAR'S IN TROUBLE, *EUGENE*.
BUT I CAN'T LEAVE YOU UNPROTECTED!
FZAK
FZAKK
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME, *HEATHER*.
I'M THE *NEW* AND *IMPROVED* VERSION, REMEMBER?
FZAK
YOU ARE MERRANO--ONE OF THE *OLDER* ONES, NO?
DON'T YOU REALIZE THE *FUTILITY* OF YOUR ACTIONS?
BETTER TO DIE *FIGHTING* THAN TO COWER IN FEAR!
BETTER BY FAR TO LIVE AND FIGHT *CONSTRUCTIVELY* FOR THE LIVES OF YOUR PEOPLE!
AUG!
YOU GENERATE--*HEAT*--FROM YOUR ARMOR?!
ONLY TO *DEHYDRATE* YOU AND PUT YOU OUT OF COMMISSION AS PAINLESSLY AS POSSIBLE!

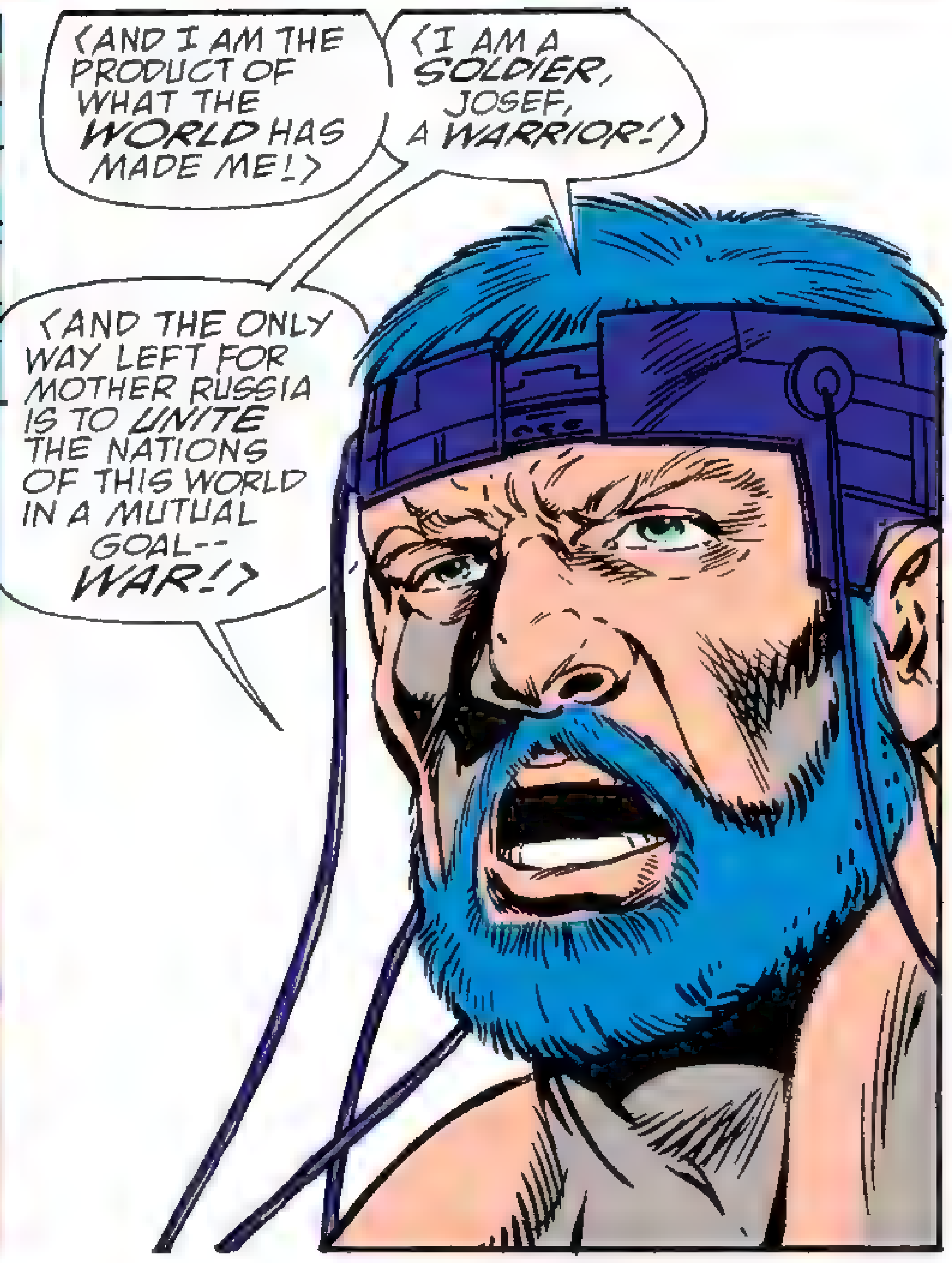

KRA
KOOM
YOU IMBECILIC, QUIVERING BAG OF FLESH--
--YOU'RE KNOCKING US INTO THE WATER!
ORKA IS NOT AS DUMB AS HE LOOKS, SURFACE MAN!
ORKA FIGHTS UNDERWATER FAR BETTER THAN YOU!
⟨THE OAF IS RIGHT--I CAN ONLY HOLD MY BREATH FOR AN HOUR OR SO. I'D BEST END THIS QUICKLY.⟩
BEEN WORKIN' SO HARD TRYIN' TO PUT THE KIBBOSH ON THE TORPEDO LAUNCH TUBES...
...I DIDN'T EVEN SEE THE ATLANTEANS APPROACH!
WELL, IT LOOKS LIKE PERUN'S GONNA NEED SOME HELP FROM BOX T'GET OUTTA THIS MESS.
GRABBIN' AN OPPONENT FROM BEHIND MIGHT NOT MAKE THE SUPER-HERO HIGHLIGHT FILMS...

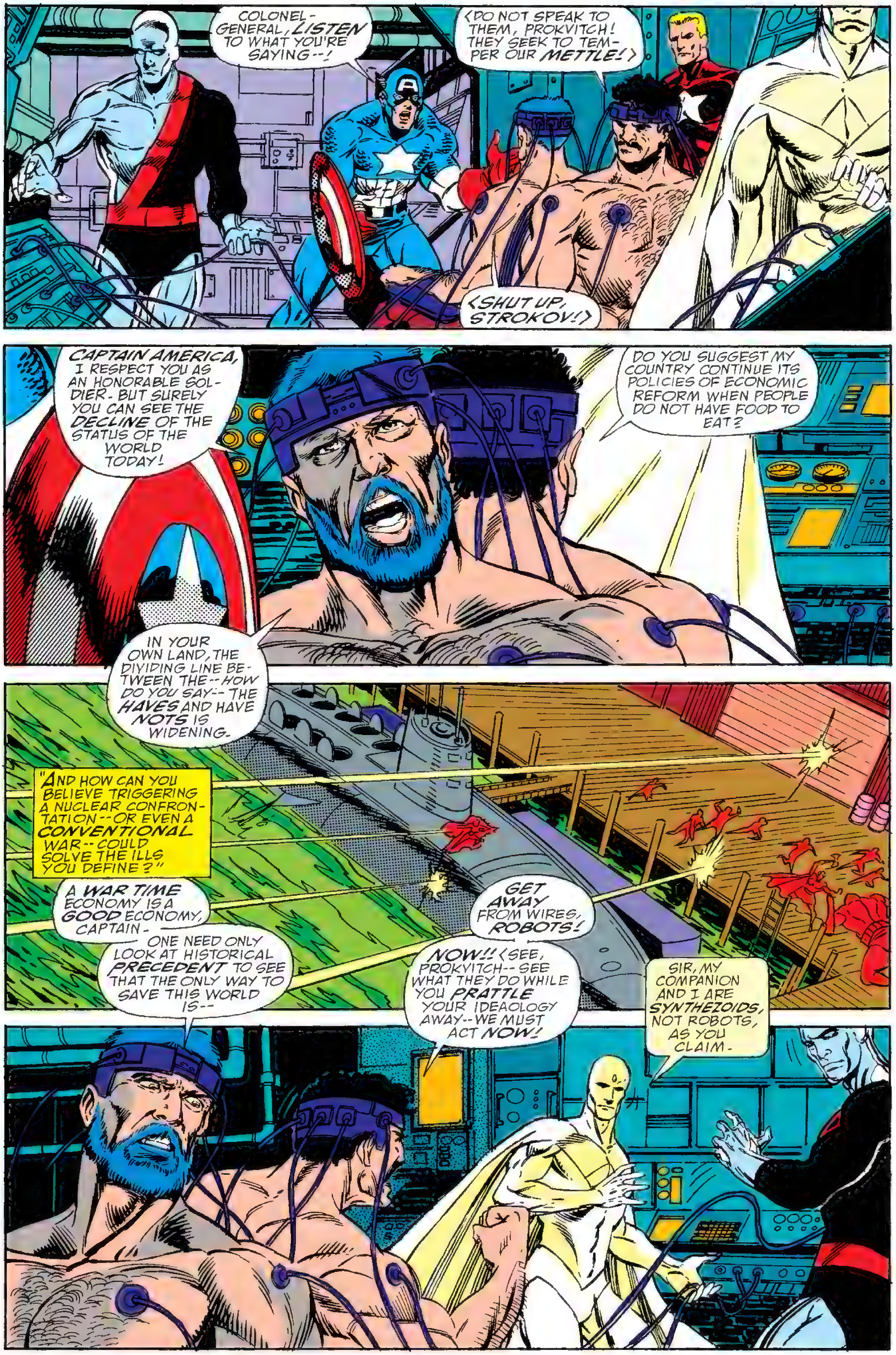
ZZZKKA
...BUT COMBINED WITH A GOOD ELECTRICAL JOLT, IT'LL GET THE JOB DONE, AN' THAT'S ALL THAT COUNTS IN WAR!
DID I SAY GOOD JOLT? IT TOOK EVERY BIT O' POWER THE ARMOR HAD LEFT T'KNOCK ORKA OUT!
BOX IS USELESS NOW--NOTHIN' BUT DEAD WEIGHT--GOTTA PHASE OUT AN' HEAD FOR THE SURFACE.
Ah, GOOD. ONE HELPIN' HAND DESERVES ANOTHER.
I STILL GOT MY MUTANT METAL TRANSMUTIN' POWERS, BUT I SURE WOULD RATHER HAVE THE ARMOR IF THIS FIGHT KEEPS GOIN' ON!
BWAAH!
ARE YOU WELL, FRIEND JEFFRIES?
JUST A LITTLE OUTTA BREATH, BIG GUY.
FAIR-NUFF.
VERY GOOD. I THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP...
...AND I WILL HIT YOU VERY HARD LATER FOR INTERFERING IN THE ONLY DECENT FRAY I'VE HAD IN MONTHS!

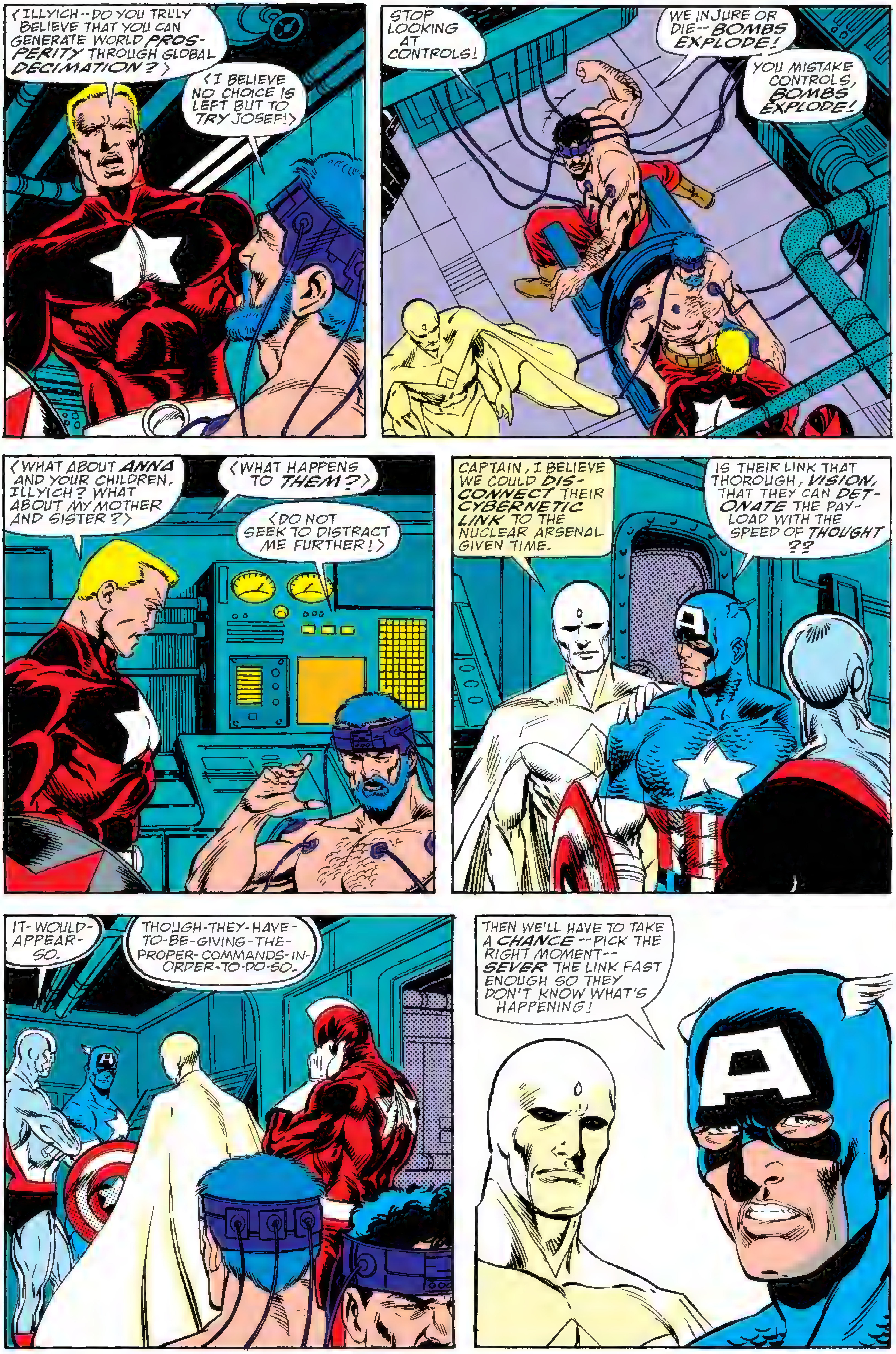

INSIDE THE WATERWIND... FOUR HOURS, TWENTY MINUTES AND COUNTING...
⟨WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS, ILLYICH PROKVITCH?⟩
MOTIVES-WOULD-APPEAR-TO-BE-MOOT-AT-THIS-POINT.
NO, VOSTOK. IF WE ARE BETTER ABLE TO UNDERSTAND WHY THESE MEN HAVE TAKEN THE ACTIONS THEY HAVE--
--WE HAVE A BETTER CHANCE OF STOPPING THIS MADNESS.
⟨YOU'RE A WEAK-WILLED GLASNOST-LOVER, RED GUARDIAN--YOU AND YOUR ENTIRE BAND OF MEDIA-MONGRELS ARE MERELY A NEW FORM OF AN OLD PROPOGANDA!⟩

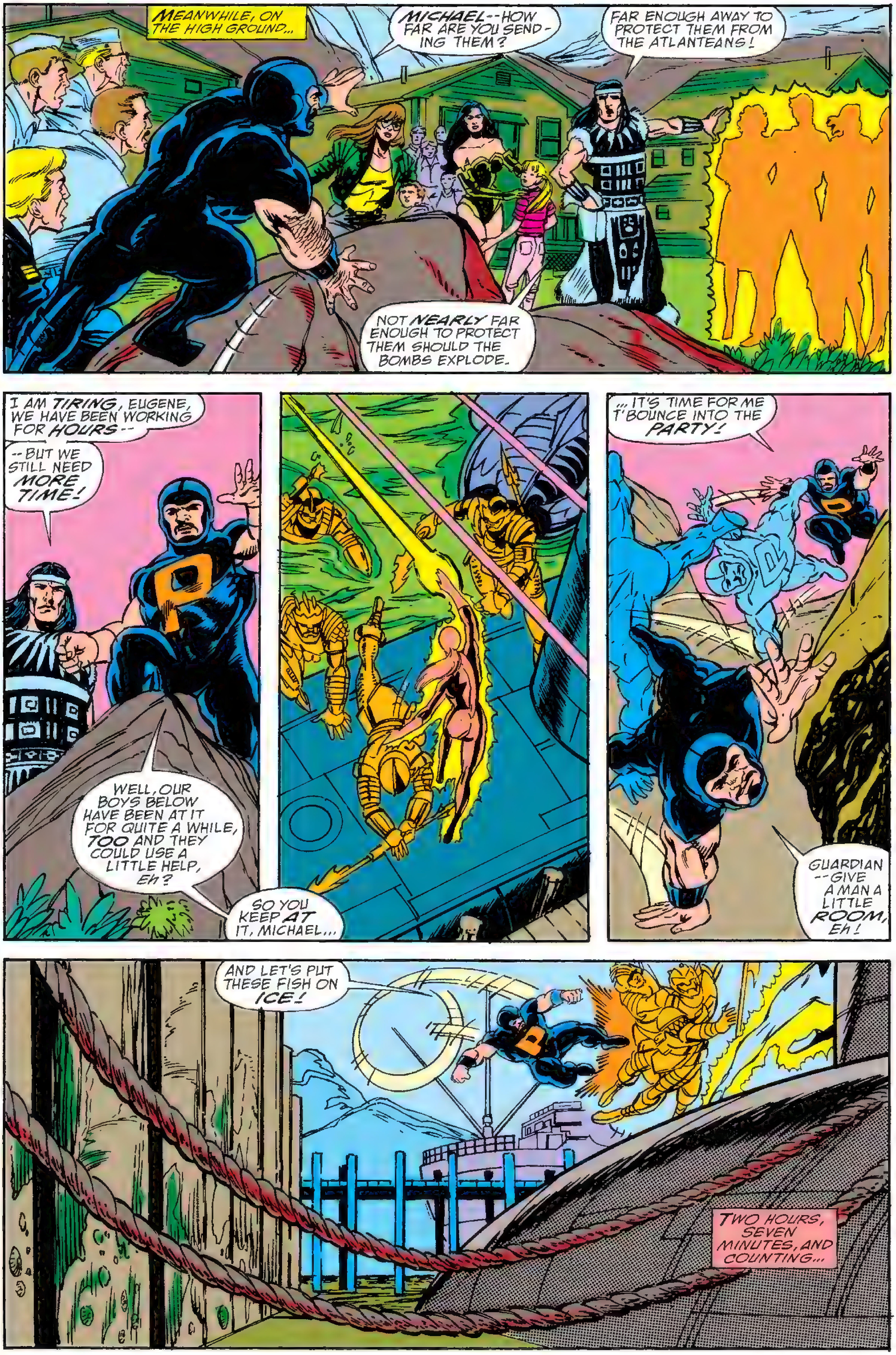

⟨NO, ILLYICH! LOOK AT ME AND SAY THE SAME THINGS!⟩
⟨JOSEF? JOSEF PETKUS?!⟩
⟨YOU KNOW THIS PUPPET OF PERESTROIKA?⟩

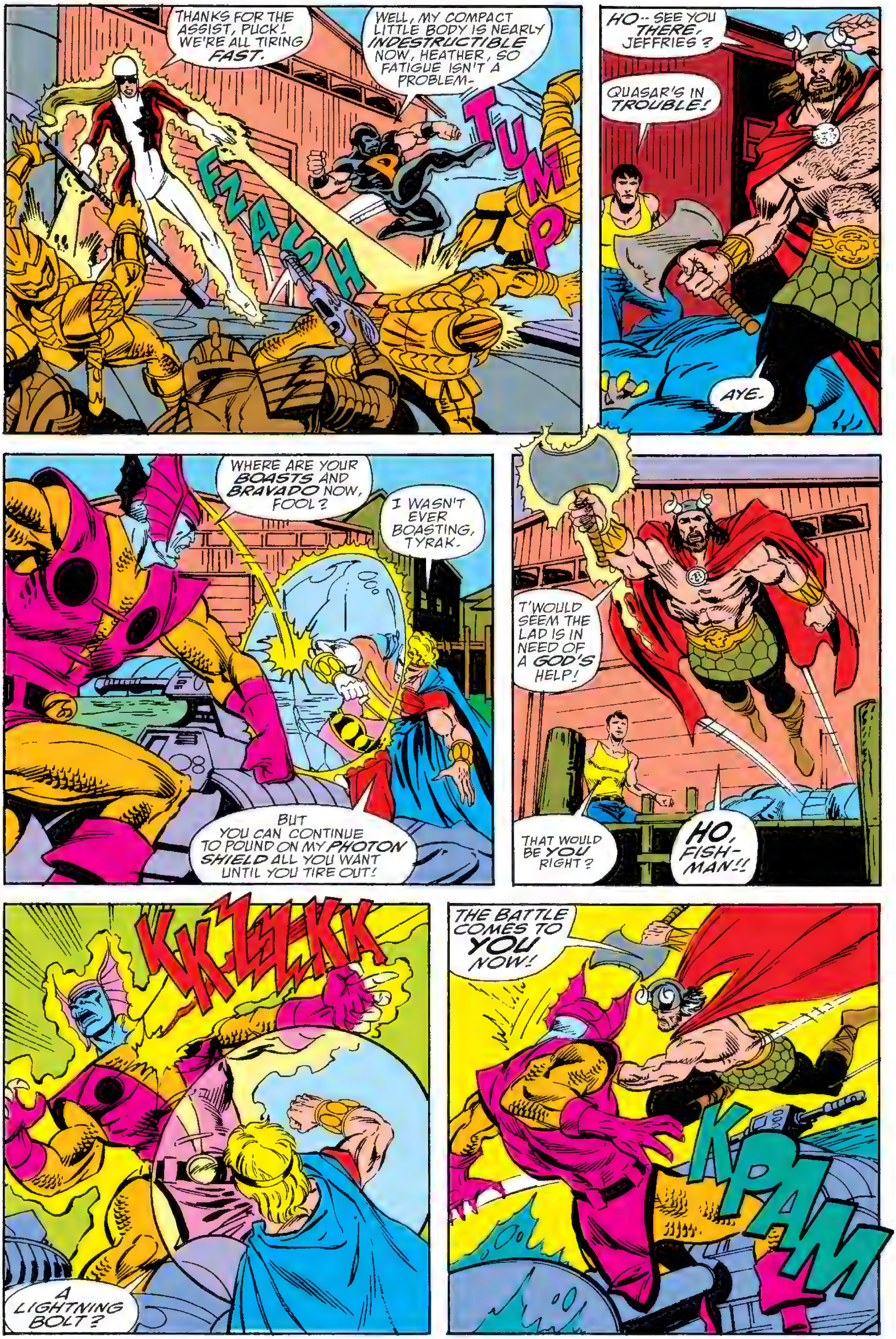

⟨OH, HE KNOWS ME VERY WELL! HE WAS MY FATHER'S BEST FRIEND!⟩
⟨HE WAS MY SPONSOR FOR THE KOMSOMAL AND MY MILITARY ACADEMY INSTRUCTOR!⟩
⟨TELL ME NOW THAT I AM NOT THE PRODUCT OF WHAT YOU HAVE MADE ME!⟩

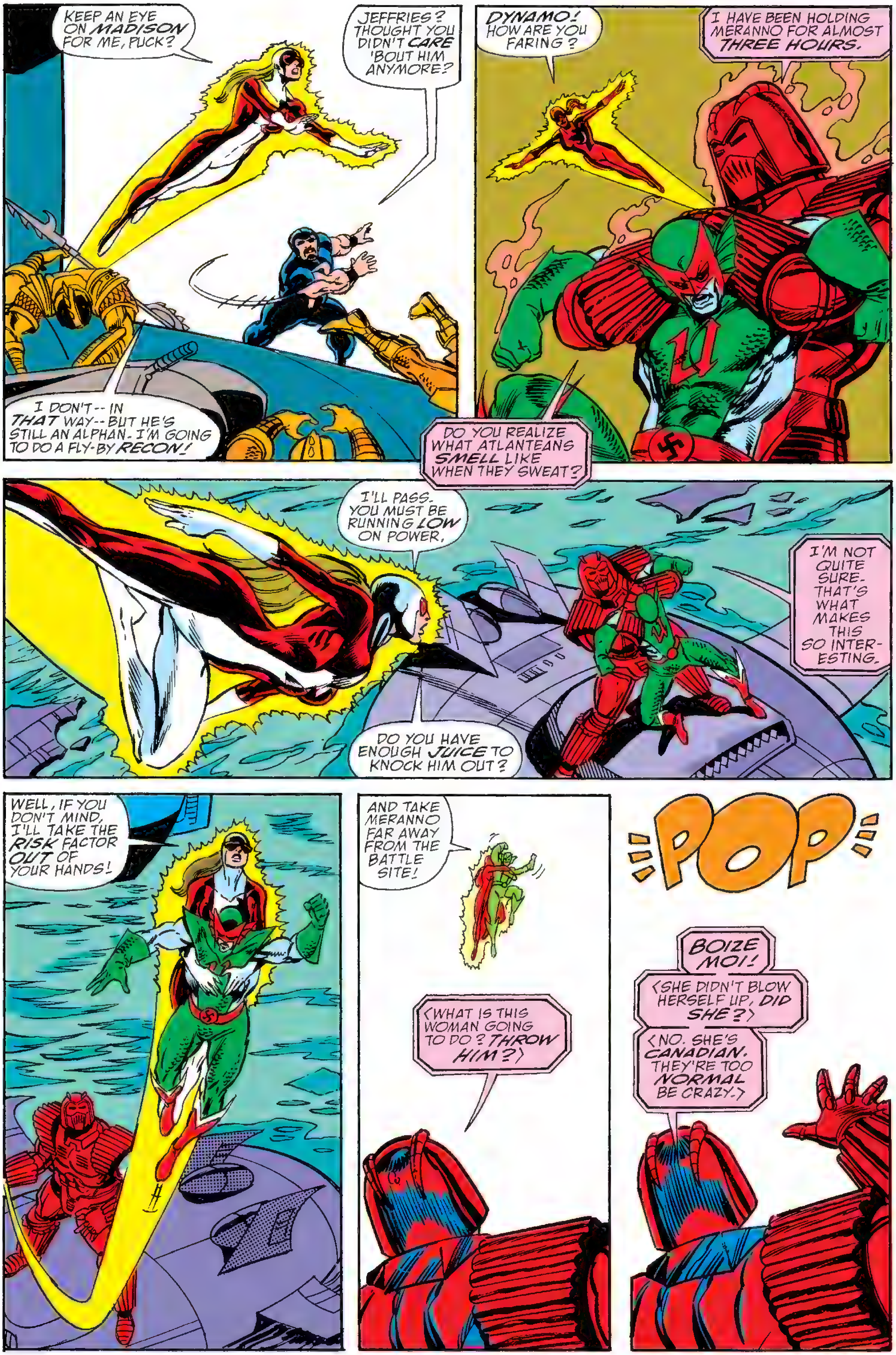

⟨AND I AM THE PRODUCT OF WHAT THE WORLD HAS MADE ME!⟩
⟨I AM A SOLDIER, JOSEF, A WARRIOR!⟩
⟨AND THE ONLY WAY LEFT FOR MOTHER RUSSIA IS TO UNITE THE NATIONS OF THIS WORLD IN A MUTUAL GOAL--WAR!⟩

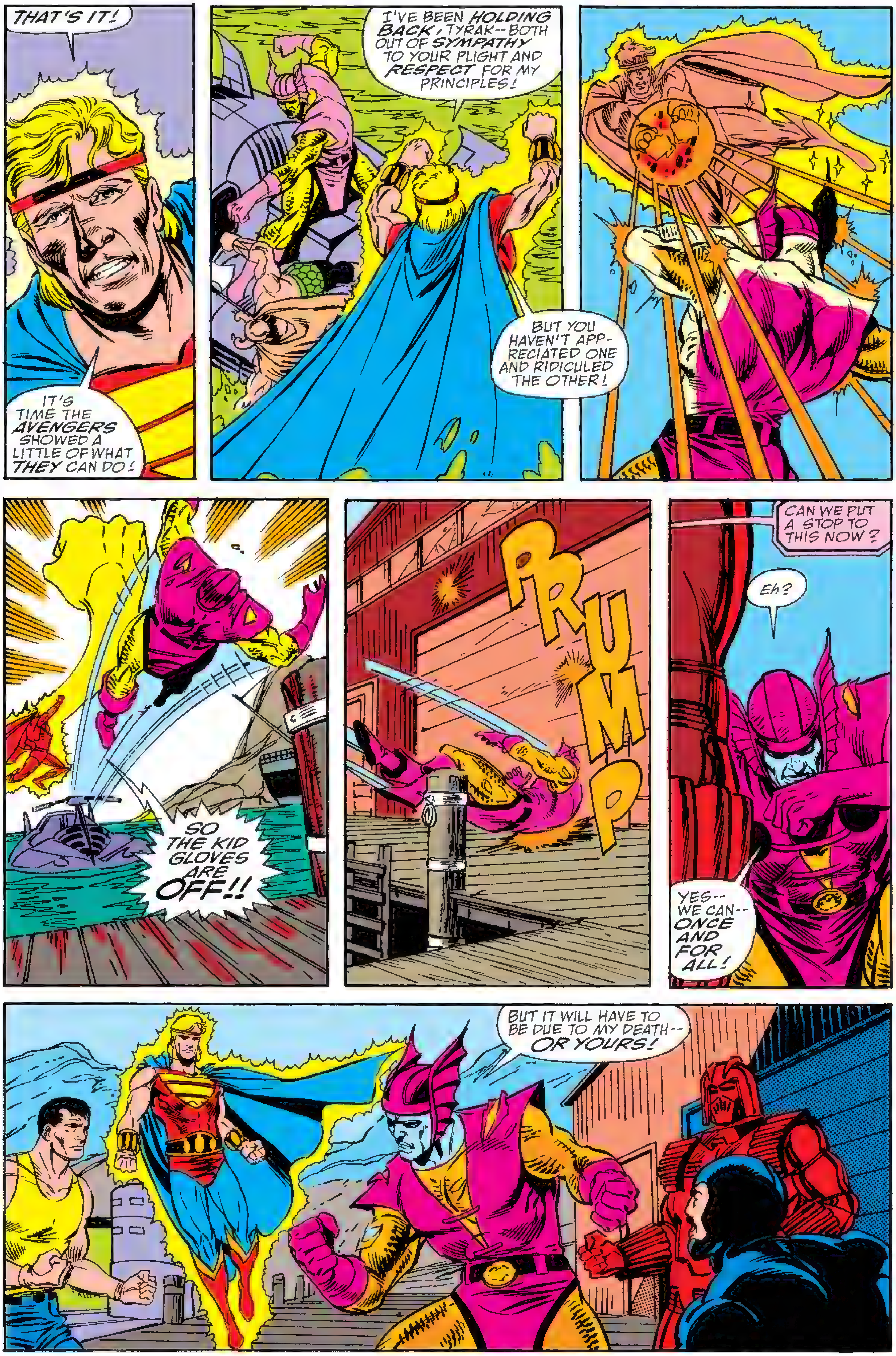

COLONEL-GENERAL, *LISTEN* TO WHAT YOU'RE SAYING--!
<DO NOT SPEAK TO THEM, PROKVITCH! THEY SEEK TO TEMPER OUR *METTLE!*>
<*SHUT UP, STROKOV!*>
CAPTAIN AMERICA, I RESPECT YOU AS AN HONORABLE SOLDIER- BUT SURELY YOU CAN SEE THE *DECLINE* OF THE STATUS OF THE WORLD TODAY!
DO YOU SUGGEST MY COUNTRY CONTINUE ITS POLICIES OF ECONOMIC REFORM WHEN PEOPLE DO NOT HAVE FOOD TO EAT?
IN YOUR OWN LAND, THE DIVIDING LINE BETWEEN THE--*HOW DO YOU SAY*--THE *HAVES* AND HAVE *NOTS* IS WIDENING.
"AND HOW CAN YOU BELIEVE TRIGGERING A NUCLEAR CONFRONTATION--OR EVEN A *CONVENTIONAL* WAR--COULD SOLVE THE ILLS YOU DEFINE?"
A *WAR TIME* ECONOMY IS A *GOOD* ECONOMY, CAPTAIN-
ONE NEED ONLY LOOK AT HISTORICAL *PRECEDENT* TO SEE THAT THE ONLY WAY TO SAVE THIS WORLD IS--
GET AWAY FROM WIRES, *ROBOTS!*
NOW!! <SEE, PROKVITCH-- SEE WHAT THEY DO WHILE YOU *PRATTLE* YOUR IDEAOLOGY AWAY--WE MUST ACT *NOW!*
SIR, MY COMPANION AND I ARE *SYNTHEZOIDS,* NOT ROBOTS, AS YOU CLAIM.

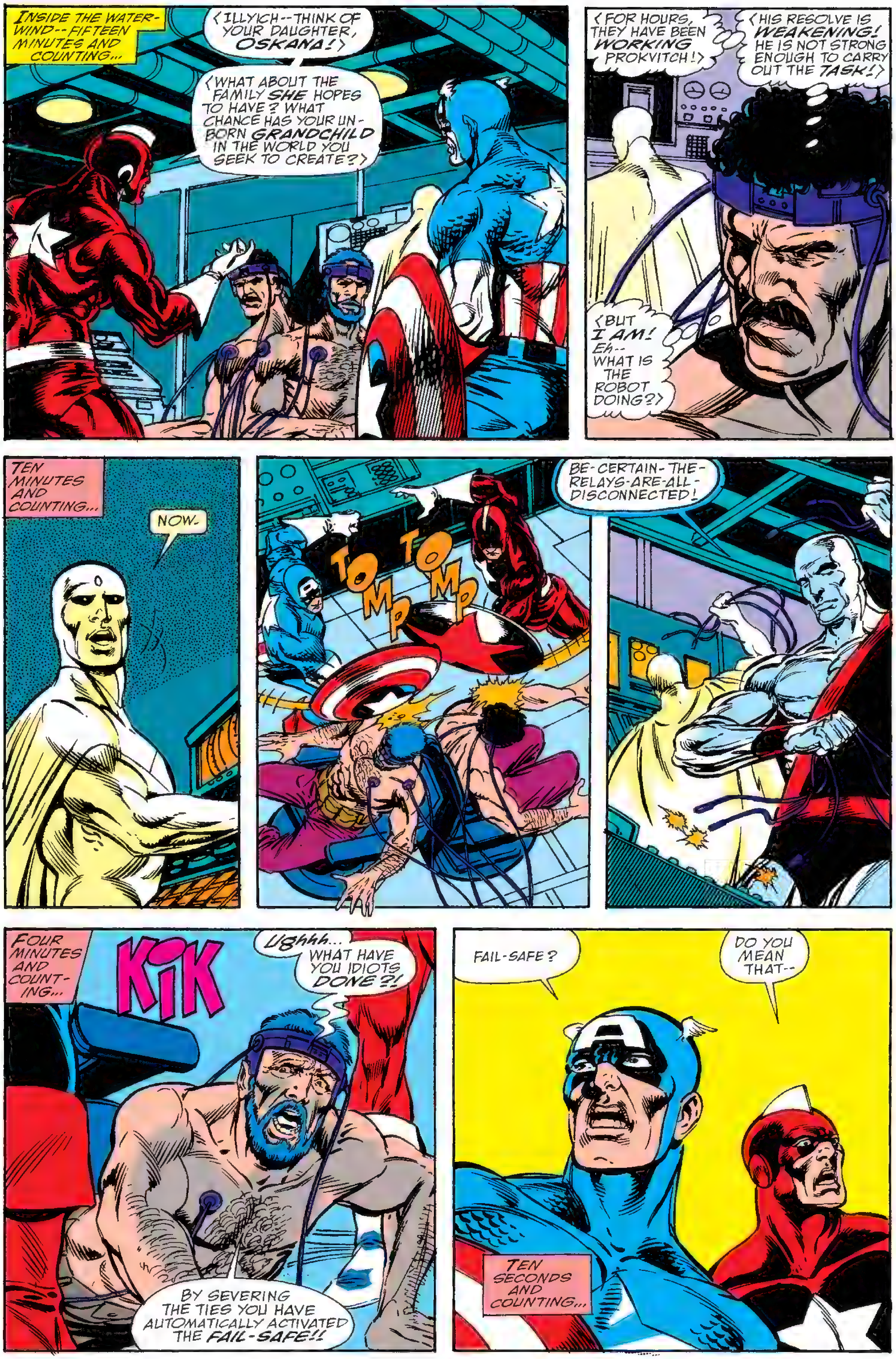

‹ILLYICH--DO YOU TRULY BELIEVE THAT YOU CAN GENERATE WORLD PROSPERITY THROUGH GLOBAL DECIMATION?›
‹I BELIEVE NO CHOICE IS LEFT BUT TO TRY JOSEF!›
STOP LOOKING AT CONTROLS!
WE INJURE OR DIE--BOMBS EXPLODE!
YOU MISTAKE CONTROLS, BOMBS EXPLODE!
‹WHAT ABOUT ANNA AND YOUR CHILDREN, ILLYICH? WHAT ABOUT MY MOTHER AND SISTER?›
‹WHAT HAPPENS TO THEM?›
‹DO NOT SEEK TO DISTRACT ME FURTHER!›
CAPTAIN, I BELIEVE WE COULD DISCONNECT THEIR CYBERNETIC LINK TO THE NUCLEAR ARSENAL GIVEN TIME.
IS THEIR LINK THAT THOROUGH, VISION, THAT THEY CAN DETONATE THE PAYLOAD WITH THE SPEED OF THOUGHT??
IT-WOULD-APPEAR-SO.
THOUGH-THEY-HAVE-TO-BE-GIVING-THE-PROPER-COMMANDS-IN-ORDER-TO-DO-SO.
THEN WE'LL HAVE TO TAKE A CHANCE --PICK THE RIGHT MOMENT-- SEVER THE LINK FAST ENOUGH SO THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING!

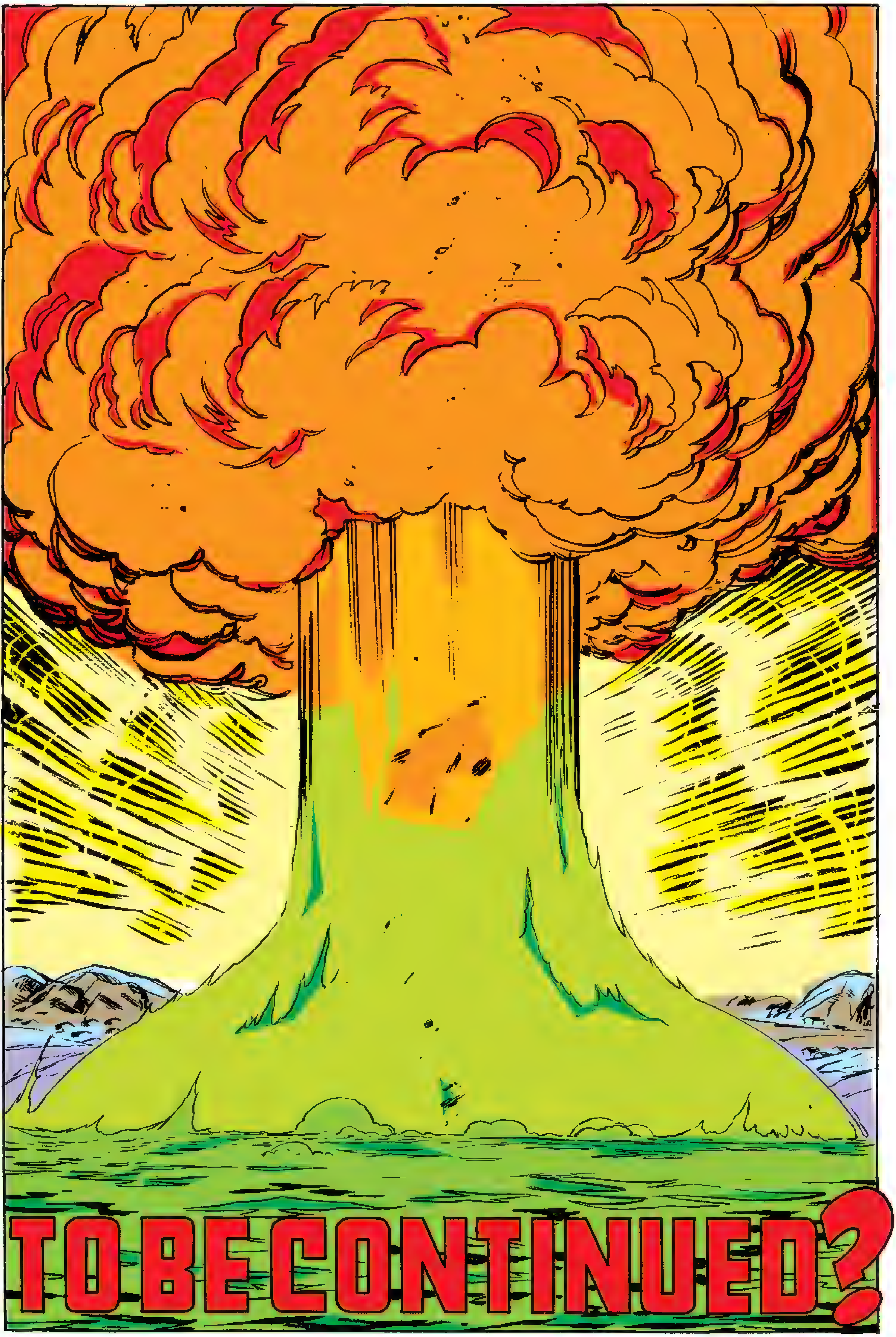

MEANWHILE, ON THE HIGH GROUND...
MICHAEL--HOW FAR ARE YOU SENDING THEM?
FAR ENOUGH AWAY TO PROTECT THEM FROM THE ATLANTEANS!
NOT NEARLY FAR ENOUGH TO PROTECT THEM SHOULD THE BOMBS EXPLODE.
I AM TIRING, EUGENE, WE HAVE BEEN WORKING FOR HOURS--
--BUT WE STILL NEED MORE TIME!
WELL, OUR BOYS BELOW HAVE BEEN AT IT FOR QUITE A WHILE, TOO AND THEY COULD USE A LITTLE HELP, EH?
SO YOU KEEP AT IT, MICHAEL...
...IT'S TIME FOR ME T'BOUNCE INTO THE PARTY!
GUARDIAN --GIVE A MAN A LITTLE ROOM, EH!
AND LET'S PUT THESE FISH ON ICE!
TWO HOURS, SEVEN MINUTES, AND COUNTING...


THANKS FOR THE ASSIST, PUCK! WE'RE ALL TIRING *FAST.*
FZASH
WELL, MY COMPACT LITTLE BODY IS NEARLY *INDESTRUCTIBLE* NOW, HEATHER, SO FATIGUE ISN'T A PROBLEM--
TUMP
HO-- SEE YOU *THERE,* JEFFRIES ?
QUASAR'S IN *TROUBLE!*
AYE.
WHERE ARE YOUR *BOASTS* AND *BRAVADO* NOW, FOOL ?
I WASN'T EVER BOASTING, TYRAK.
BUT YOU CAN CONTINUE TO POUND ON MY *PHOTON SHIELD* ALL YOU WANT UNTIL YOU TIRE OUT!
T'WOULD SEEM THE LAD IS IN NEED OF A *GOD'S* HELP!
THAT WOULD BE *YOU* RIGHT ?
HO, FISH-MAN!!
KKZZZKK
A LIGHTNING BOLT ?
THE BATTLE COMES TO *YOU* NOW!
KPAM

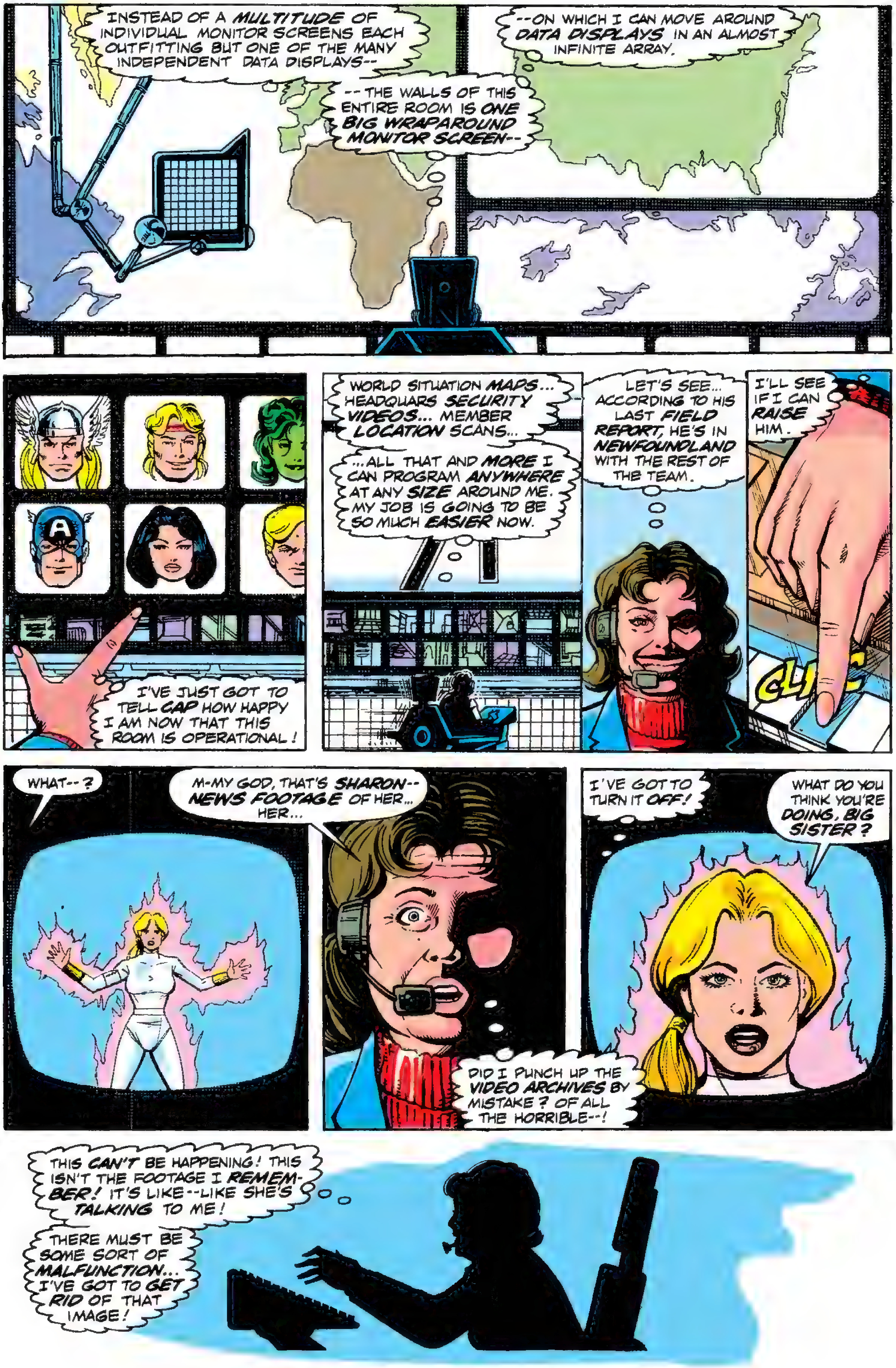

KEEP AN EYE ON MADISON FOR ME, PUCK?
JEFFRIES? THOUGHT YOU DIDN'T CARE 'BOUT HIM ANYMORE?
I DON'T -- IN THAT WAY -- BUT HE'S STILL AN ALPHAN. I'M GOING TO DO A FLY-BY RECON!
DYNAMO! HOW ARE YOU FARING?
I HAVE BEEN HOLDING MERANNO FOR ALMOST THREE HOURS.
DO YOU REALIZE WHAT ATLANTEANS SMELL LIKE WHEN THEY SWEAT?
I'LL PASS. YOU MUST BE RUNNING LOW ON POWER.
I'M NOT QUITE SURE. THAT'S WHAT MAKES THIS SO INTERESTING.
DO YOU HAVE ENOUGH JUICE TO KNOCK HIM OUT?
WELL, IF YOU DON'T MIND, I'LL TAKE THE RISK FACTOR OUT OF YOUR HANDS!
AND TAKE MERANNO FAR AWAY FROM THE BATTLE SITE!
‹WHAT IS THIS WOMAN GOING TO DO? THROW HIM?›
POP
BOIZE MOI!
‹SHE DIDN'T BLOW HERSELF UP, DID SHE?›
‹NO. SHE'S CANADIAN. THEY'RE TOO NORMAL BE CRAZY.›

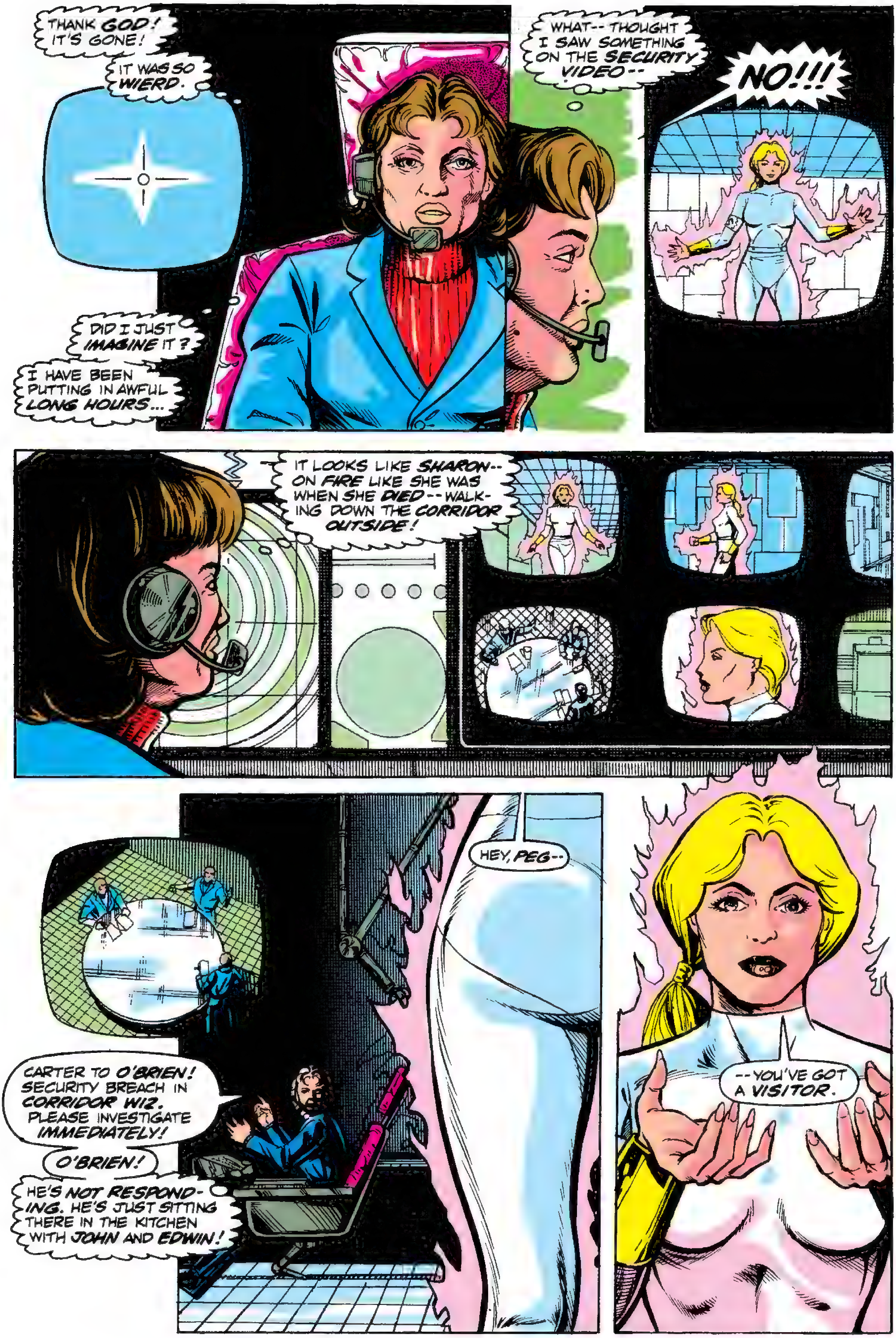

THAT'S IT!
IT'S TIME THE AVENGERS SHOWED A LITTLE OF WHAT THEY CAN DO!
I'VE BEEN HOLDING BACK, TYRAK--BOTH OUT OF SYMPATHY TO YOUR PLIGHT AND RESPECT FOR MY PRINCIPLES!
BUT YOU HAVEN'T APPRECIATED ONE AND RIDICULED THE OTHER!
FFFEE
SO THE KID GLOVES ARE OFF!!
PRRUMP
CAN WE PUT A STOP TO THIS NOW?
Eh?
YES--WE CAN--ONCE AND FOR ALL!
BUT IT WILL HAVE TO BE DUE TO MY DEATH--OR YOURS!

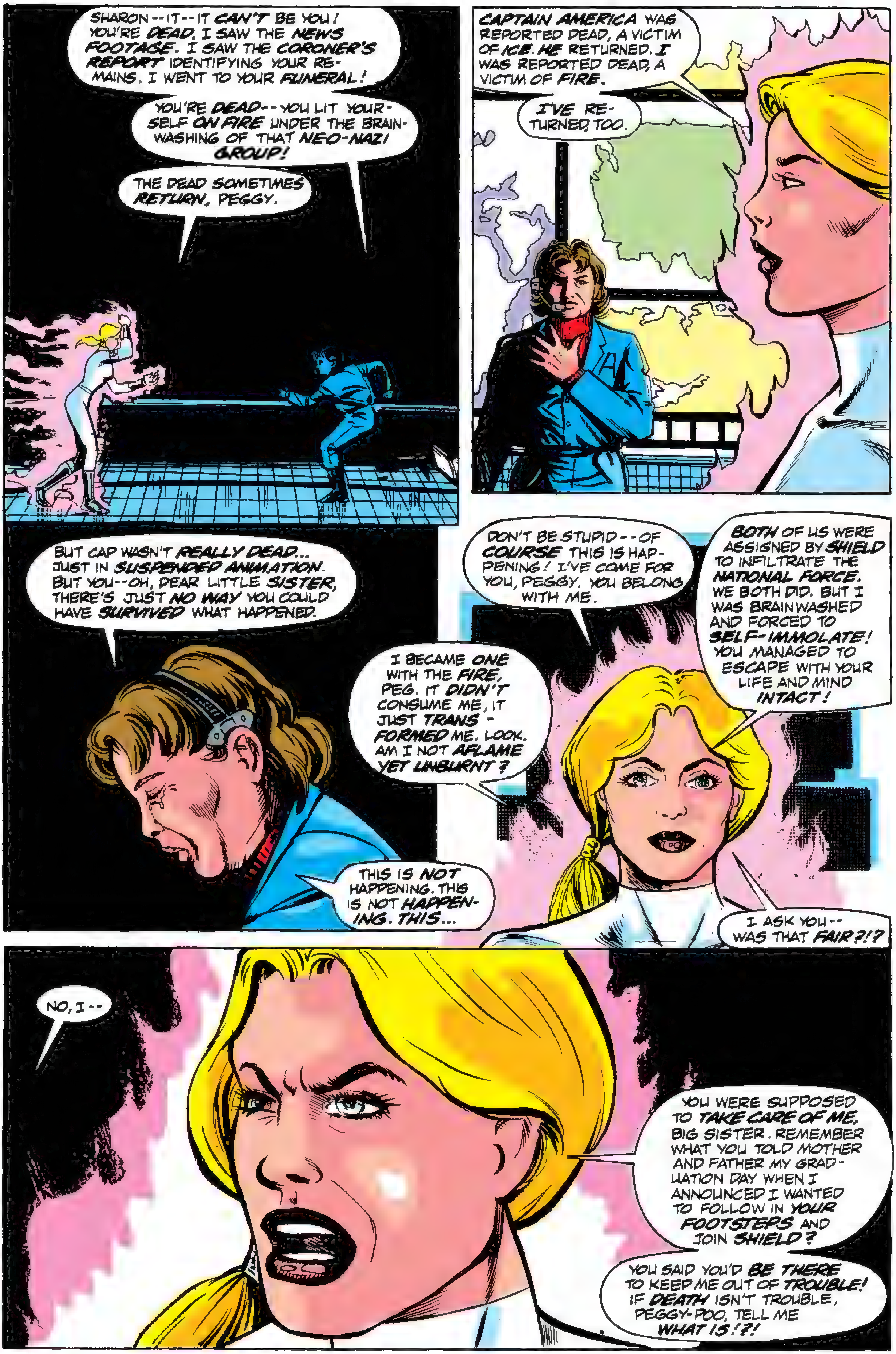

INSIDE THE WATER-WIND--FIFTEEN MINUTES AND COUNTING...
‹ILLYICH--THINK OF YOUR DAUGHTER, OSKANA!›
‹WHAT ABOUT THE FAMILY SHE HOPES TO HAVE? WHAT CHANCE HAS YOUR UNBORN GRANDCHILD IN THE WORLD YOU SEEK TO CREATE?›
‹FOR HOURS, THEY HAVE BEEN WORKING PROKVITCH!›
‹HIS RESOLVE IS WEAKENING! HE IS NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO CARRY OUT THE TASK!›
‹BUT I AM! Eh-- WHAT IS THE ROBOT DOING?›
TEN MINUTES AND COUNTING...
NOW.
TOMP TOMP
BE-CERTAIN-THE-RELAYS-ARE-ALL-DISCONNECTED!
FOUR MINUTES AND COUNTING...
KIK
Ughhh... WHAT HAVE YOU IDIOTS DONE?!
BY SEVERING THE TIES YOU HAVE AUTOMATICALLY ACTIVATED THE FAIL-SAFE!!
FAIL-SAFE?
DO YOU MEAN THAT--
TEN SECONDS AND COUNTING...

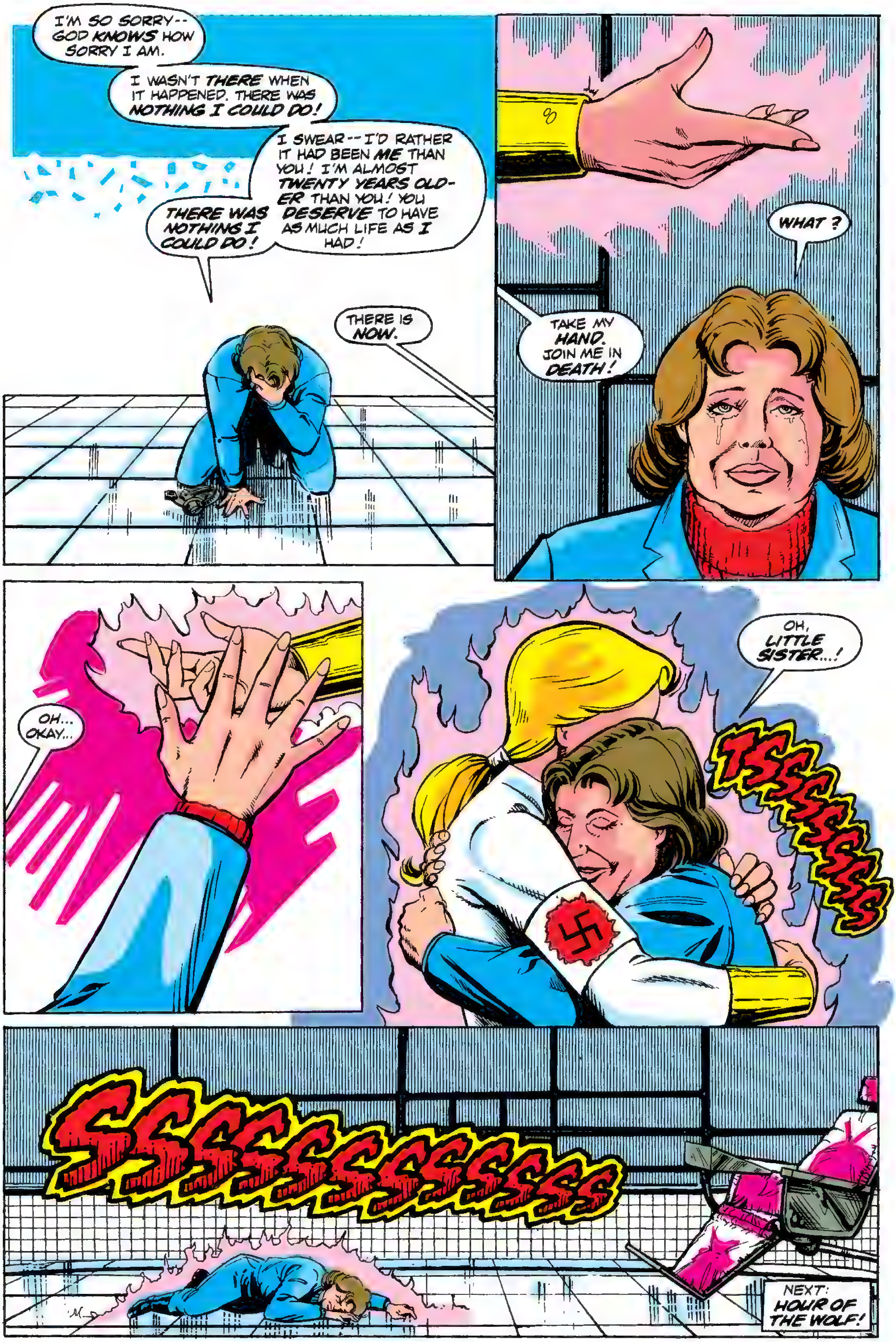

TO BE CONTINUED?

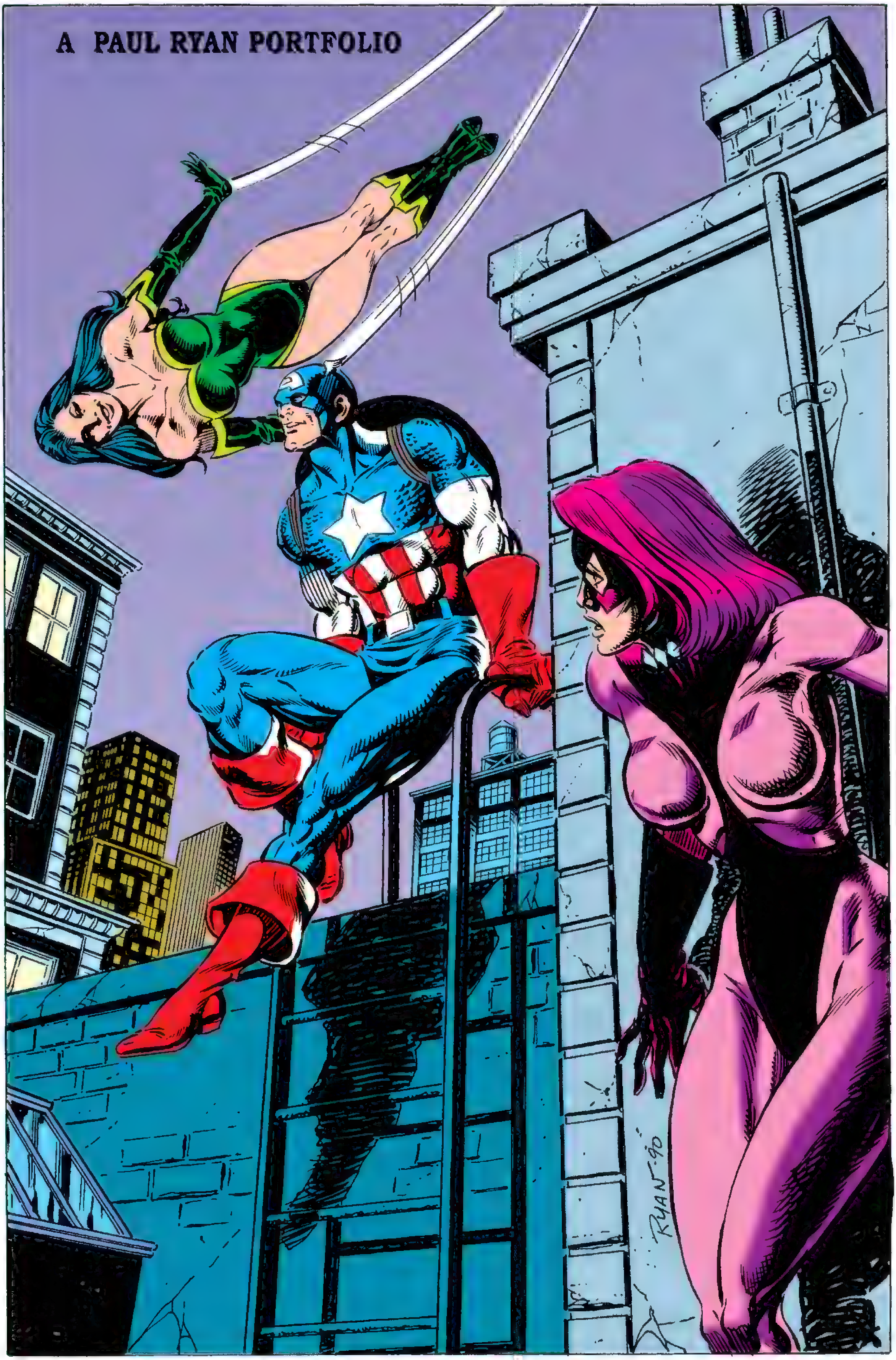
THE AVENGERS CREW
OF ALL THE ROOMS IN THE AVENGERS' NEW HEADQUARTERS COMPLEX STILL UNDER CONSTRUCTION, THIS RECENTLY REFURBISHED CHAMBER MAY BE THE MOST VITAL.
MARK GRUENWALD STORY
JIM REDDINGTON PENCILS
MICKEY RITTER INKS
CHRIS ELIOPOULOS LETTERS
JOE ROSAS COLORS
FOR IT IS HERE WHERE THE AVENGERS' EYES, EARS, AND MOUTH ARE SITUATED, THE THREE ELECTRONIC ORGANS WHICH SERVE AS THE WORLD'S MIGHTIEST FIGHTING TEAM'S LINK WITH THE WORLD THEY HAVE SWORN TO PROTECT.
THE COMMUNICATIONS COMPLEX WAS CUSTOM-BUILT FOR THE WOMAN WHO IS SEATED AT HER COMMAND CHAIR FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME. HER NAME IS PEGGY ALEXANDRA CARTER AND SHE IS A SEASONED VETERAN OF SOME OF THE TOP INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES OF THE FREE WORLD...
INTO THE FIRE
THIS IS... JUST INCREDIBLE. THE SPECS ON THIS PLACE JUST DIDN'T PREPARE ME FOR THE EXQUISITE PERFECTION OF THIS FACILITY!
NOT EVEN SHIELD HAD A COM-CENTER THIS SOPHISTICATED. THE TECHNOLOGY HERE IS STATE OF THE ART AND THEN SOME.
I'M SO AWESTRUCK I CAN'T EVEN DECIDE WHAT SYSTEM TO TRY OUT FIRST.
I FEEL LIKE A KID ON CHRISTMAS WITH A MILLION PRESENTS TO OPEN.


INSTEAD OF A MULTITUDE OF INDIVIDUAL MONITOR SCREENS EACH OUTFITTING BUT ONE OF THE MANY INDEPENDENT DATA DISPLAYS--
--THE WALLS OF THIS ENTIRE ROOM IS ONE BIG WRAPAROUND MONITOR SCREEN--
--ON WHICH I CAN MOVE AROUND DATA DISPLAYS IN AN ALMOST INFINITE ARRAY.
I'VE JUST GOT TO TELL CAP HOW HAPPY I AM NOW THAT THIS ROOM IS OPERATIONAL!
WORLD SITUATION MAPS... HEADQUARS SECURITY VIDEOS... MEMBER LOCATION SCANS...
...ALL THAT AND MORE I CAN PROGRAM ANYWHERE AT ANY SIZE AROUND ME. MY JOB IS GOING TO BE SO MUCH EASIER NOW.
LET'S SEE... ACCORDING TO HIS LAST FIELD REPORT, HE'S IN NEWFOUNDLAND WITH THE REST OF THE TEAM.
I'LL SEE IF I CAN RAISE HIM.
CLIC
WHAT--?
M-MY GOD, THAT'S SHARON--NEWS FOOTAGE OF HER... HER...
DID I PUNCH UP THE VIDEO ARCHIVES BY MISTAKE? OF ALL THE HORRIBLE--!
I'VE GOT TO TURN IT OFF!
WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING, BIG SISTER?
THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING! THIS ISN'T THE FOOTAGE I REMEMBER! IT'S LIKE--LIKE SHE'S TALKING TO ME!
THERE MUST BE SOME SORT OF MALFUNCTION... I'VE GOT TO GET RID OF THAT IMAGE!


THANK GOD! IT'S GONE!
IT WAS SO WIERD.
DID I JUST IMAGINE IT?
I HAVE BEEN PUTTING IN AWFUL LONG HOURS...
WHAT-- THOUGHT I SAW SOMETHING ON THE SECURITY VIDEO--
NO!!!
IT LOOKS LIKE SHARON-- ON FIRE LIKE SHE WAS WHEN SHE DIED--WALKING DOWN THE CORRIDOR OUTSIDE!
CARTER TO O'BRIEN! SECURITY BREACH IN CORRIDOR W12. PLEASE INVESTIGATE IMMEDIATELY!
O'BRIEN!
HE'S NOT RESPONDING. HE'S JUST SITTING THERE IN THE KITCHEN WITH JOHN AND EDWIN!
HEY, PEG--
--YOU'VE GOT A VISITOR.


SHARON--IT--IT CAN'T BE YOU! YOU'RE DEAD. I SAW THE NEWS FOOTAGE. I SAW THE CORONER'S REPORT IDENTIFYING YOUR REMAINS. I WENT TO YOUR FUNERAL!
YOU'RE DEAD--YOU LIT YOURSELF ON FIRE UNDER THE BRAINWASHING OF THAT NEO-NAZI GROUP!
THE DEAD SOMETIMES RETURN, PEGGY.
CAPTAIN AMERICA WAS REPORTED DEAD, A VICTIM OF ICE. HE RETURNED. I WAS REPORTED DEAD, A VICTIM OF FIRE.
I'VE RETURNED, TOO.
BUT CAP WASN'T REALLY DEAD... JUST IN SUSPENDED ANIMATION. BUT YOU--OH, DEAR LITTLE SISTER, THERE'S JUST NO WAY YOU COULD HAVE SURVIVED WHAT HAPPENED.
I BECAME ONE WITH THE FIRE, PEG. IT DIDN'T CONSUME ME, IT JUST TRANSFORMED ME. LOOK. AM I NOT AFLAME YET UNBURNT?
THIS IS NOT HAPPENING. THIS IS NOT HAPPENING. THIS...
DON'T BE STUPID--OF COURSE THIS IS HAPPENING! I'VE COME FOR YOU, PEGGY. YOU BELONG WITH ME.
BOTH OF US WERE ASSIGNED BY SHIELD TO INFILTRATE THE NATIONAL FORCE. WE BOTH DID. BUT I WAS BRAINWASHED AND FORCED TO SELF-IMMOLATE! YOU MANAGED TO ESCAPE WITH YOUR LIFE AND MIND INTACT!
I ASK YOU--WAS THAT FAIR?!?
NO, I--
YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO TAKE CARE OF ME, BIG SISTER. REMEMBER WHAT YOU TOLD MOTHER AND FATHER MY GRADUATION DAY WHEN I ANNOUNCED I WANTED TO FOLLOW IN YOUR FOOTSTEPS AND JOIN SHIELD?
YOU SAID YOU'D BE THERE TO KEEP ME OUT OF TROUBLE! IF DEATH ISN'T TROUBLE, PEGGY-POO, TELL ME WHAT IS!?!


I'M SO SORRY-- GOD KNOWS HOW SORRY I AM.
I WASN'T THERE WHEN IT HAPPENED. THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO!
I SWEAR--I'D RATHER IT HAD BEEN ME THAN YOU! I'M ALMOST TWENTY YEARS OLDER THAN YOU! YOU DESERVE TO HAVE AS MUCH LIFE AS I HAD!
THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO!
THERE IS NOW.
WHAT?
TAKE MY HAND. JOIN ME IN DEATH!
OH... OKAY...
OH, LITTLE SISTER...!
TSSSSSSSS
SSSSSSSSSSSSSS
NEXT: HOUR OF THE WOLF!


A PAUL RYAN PORTFOLIO
RYAN '90

MARVEL FANFARE #52 PINUP BY PAUL RYAN

MARVEL® COMICS
THE CROSSING LINE
PART 4 OF SIX
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APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
GROUND ZERO!
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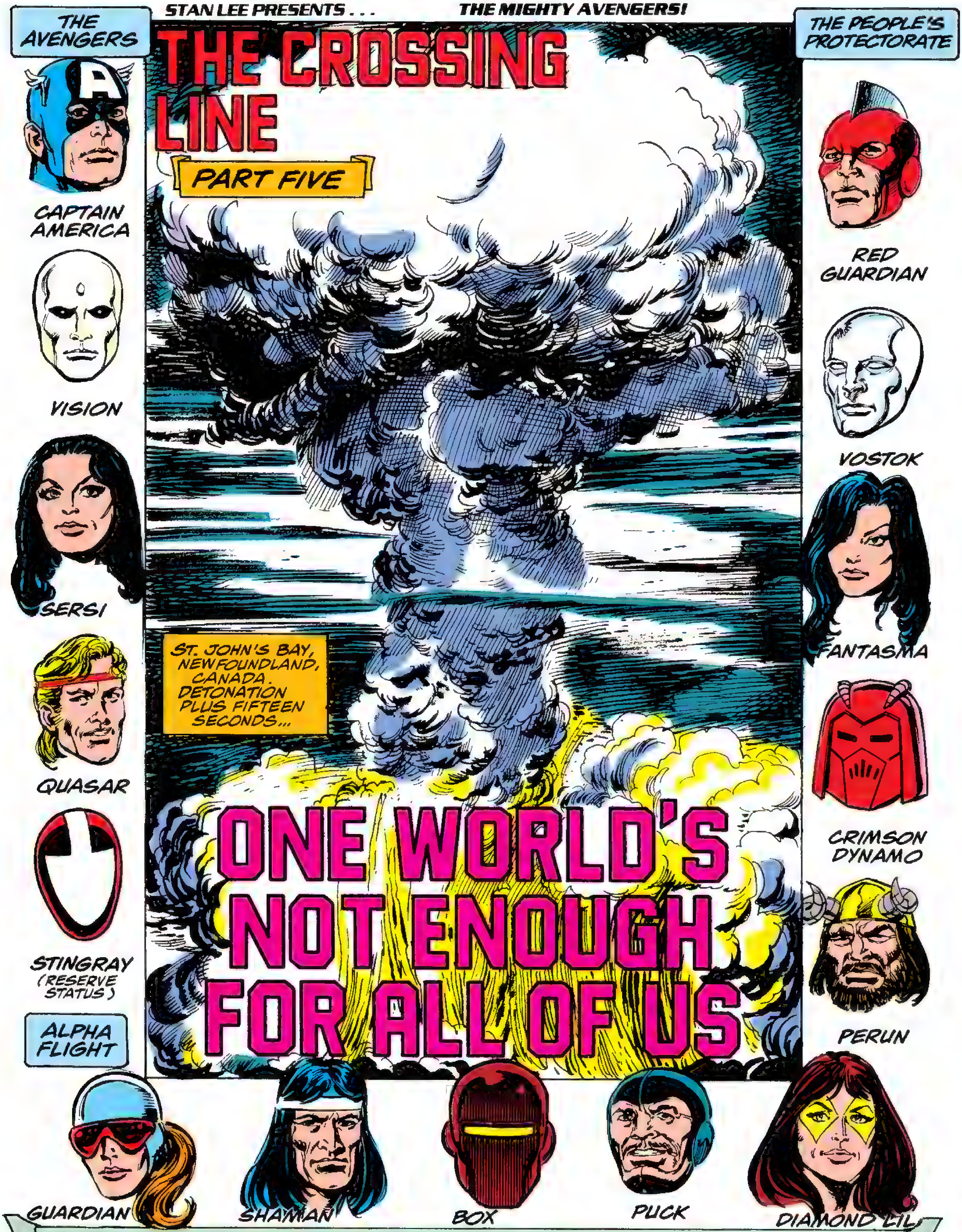
TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND!

STAN LEE PRESENTS . . . THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

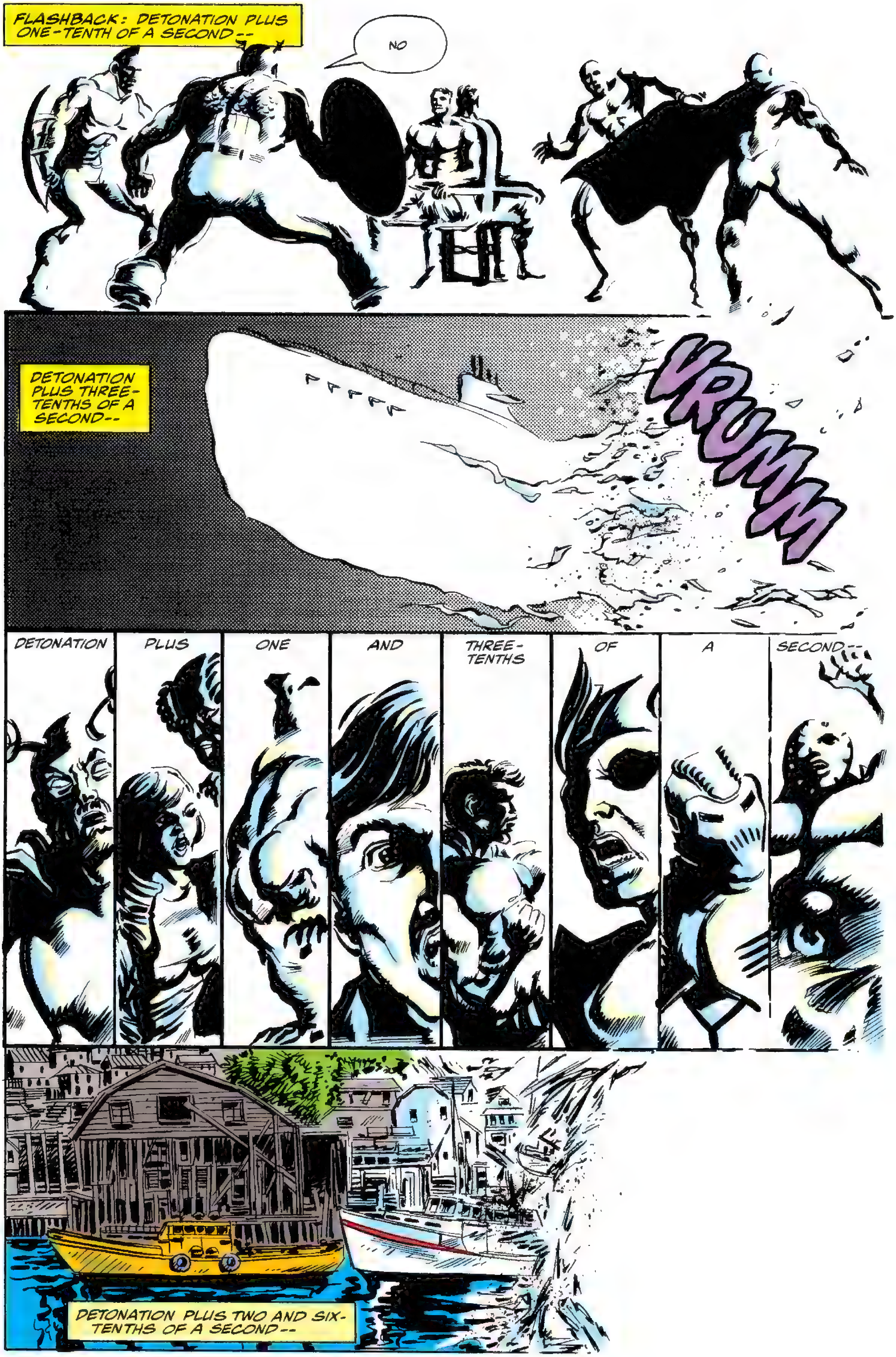
THE CROSSING LINE

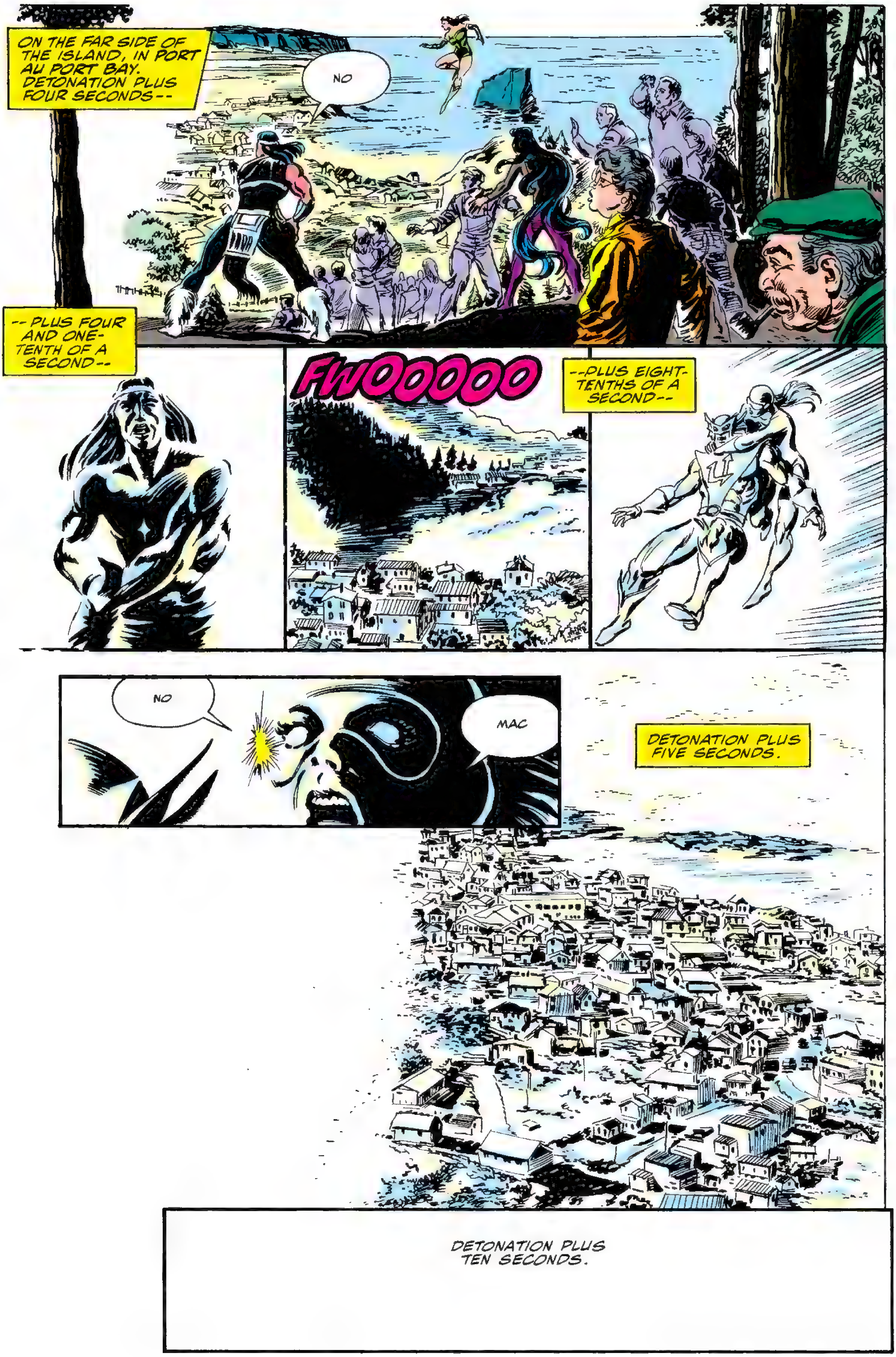
PART FIVE

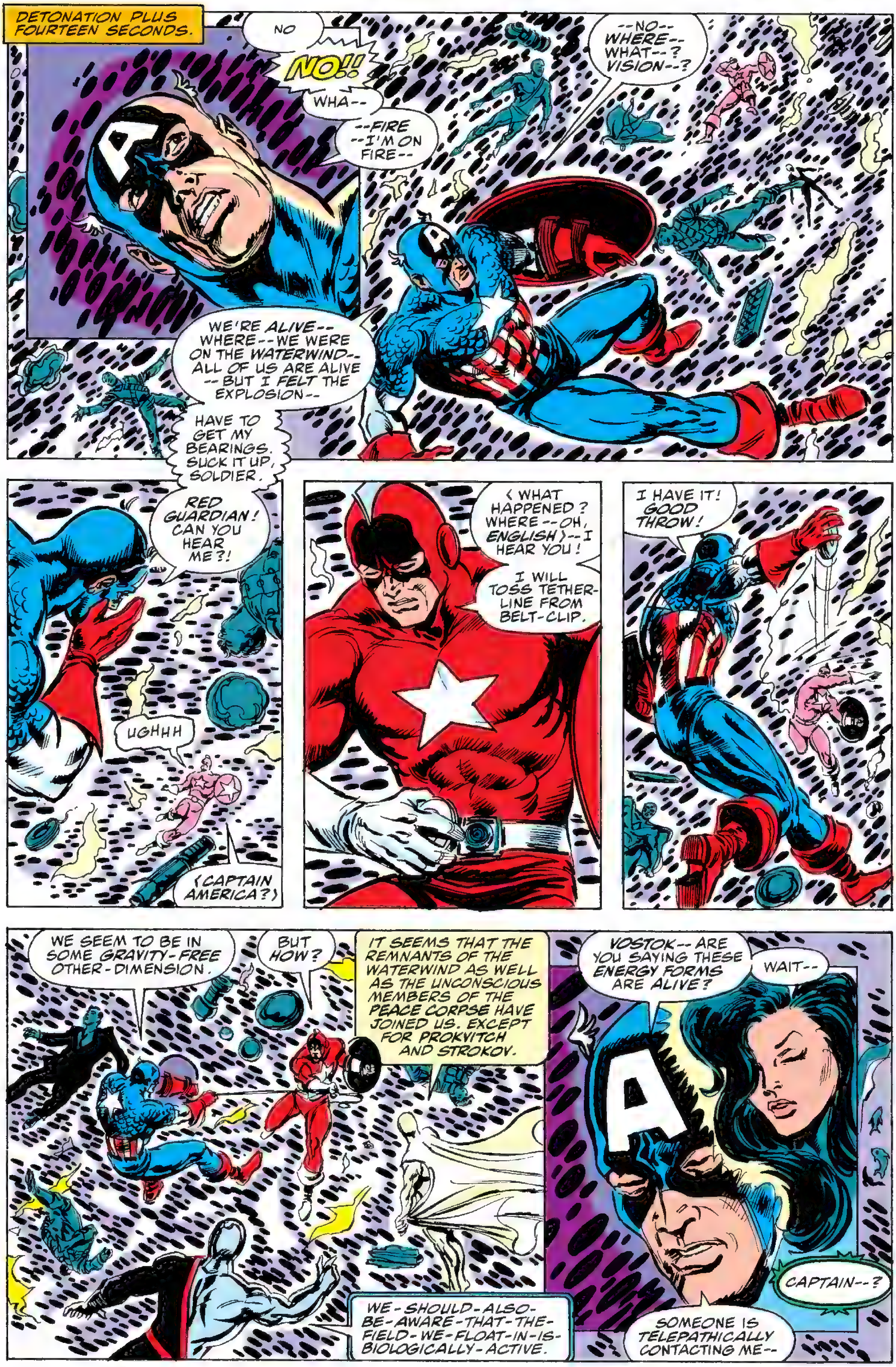
ONE WORLD'S NOT ENOUGH FOR ALL OF US

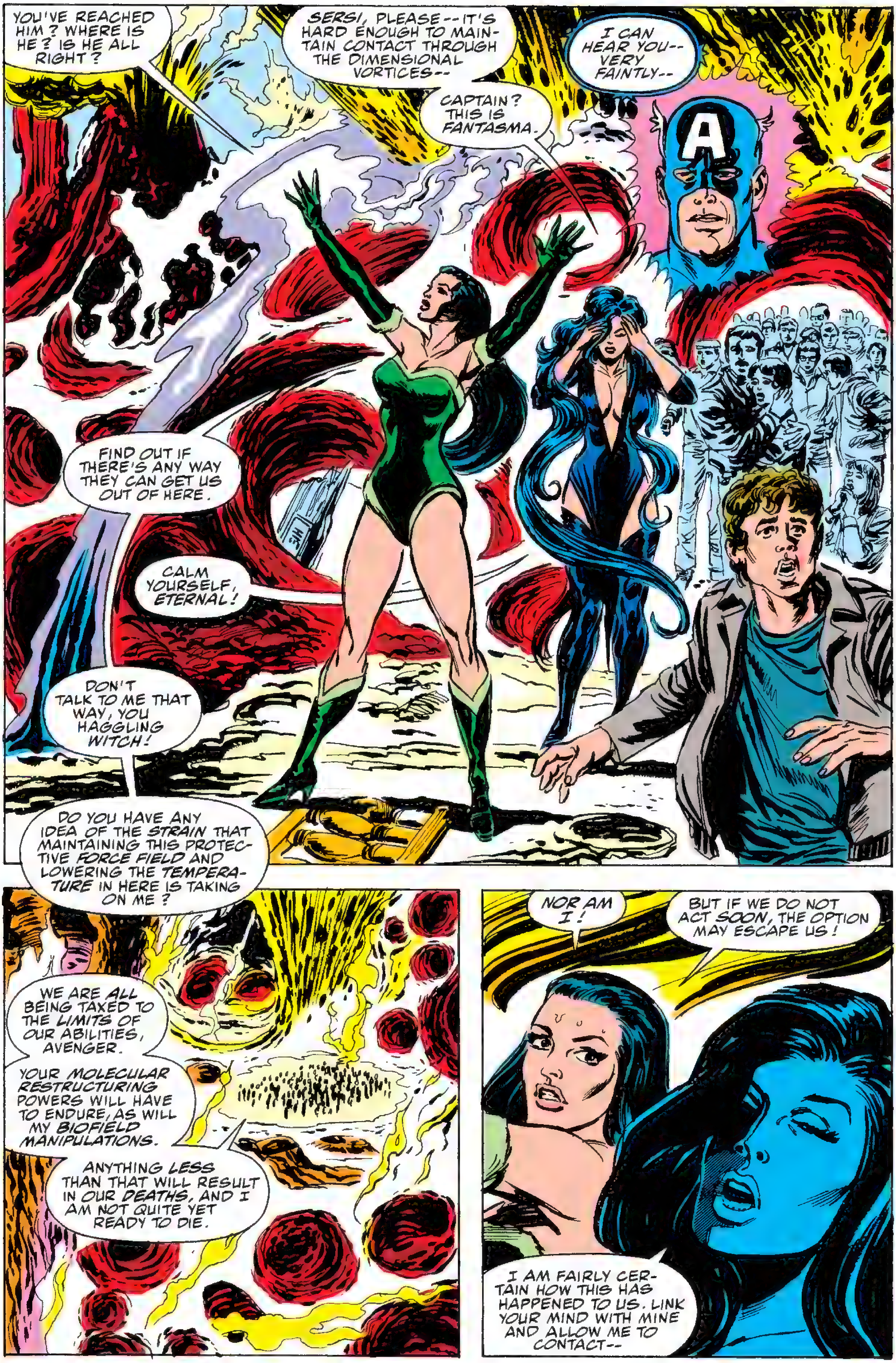

THE AVENGERS
CAPTAIN AMERICA
VISION
SERSI
QUASAR
STINGRAY (RESERVE STATUS)
THE PEOPLE'S PROTECTORATE
RED GUARDIAN
VOSTOK
FANTASMA
CRIMSON DYNAMO
PERUN
ST. JOHN'S BAY, NEWFOUNDLAND, CANADA. DETONATION PLUS FIFTEEN SECONDS...
ALPHA FLIGHT
GUARDIAN
SHAMAN
BOX
PUCK
DIAMOND LIL

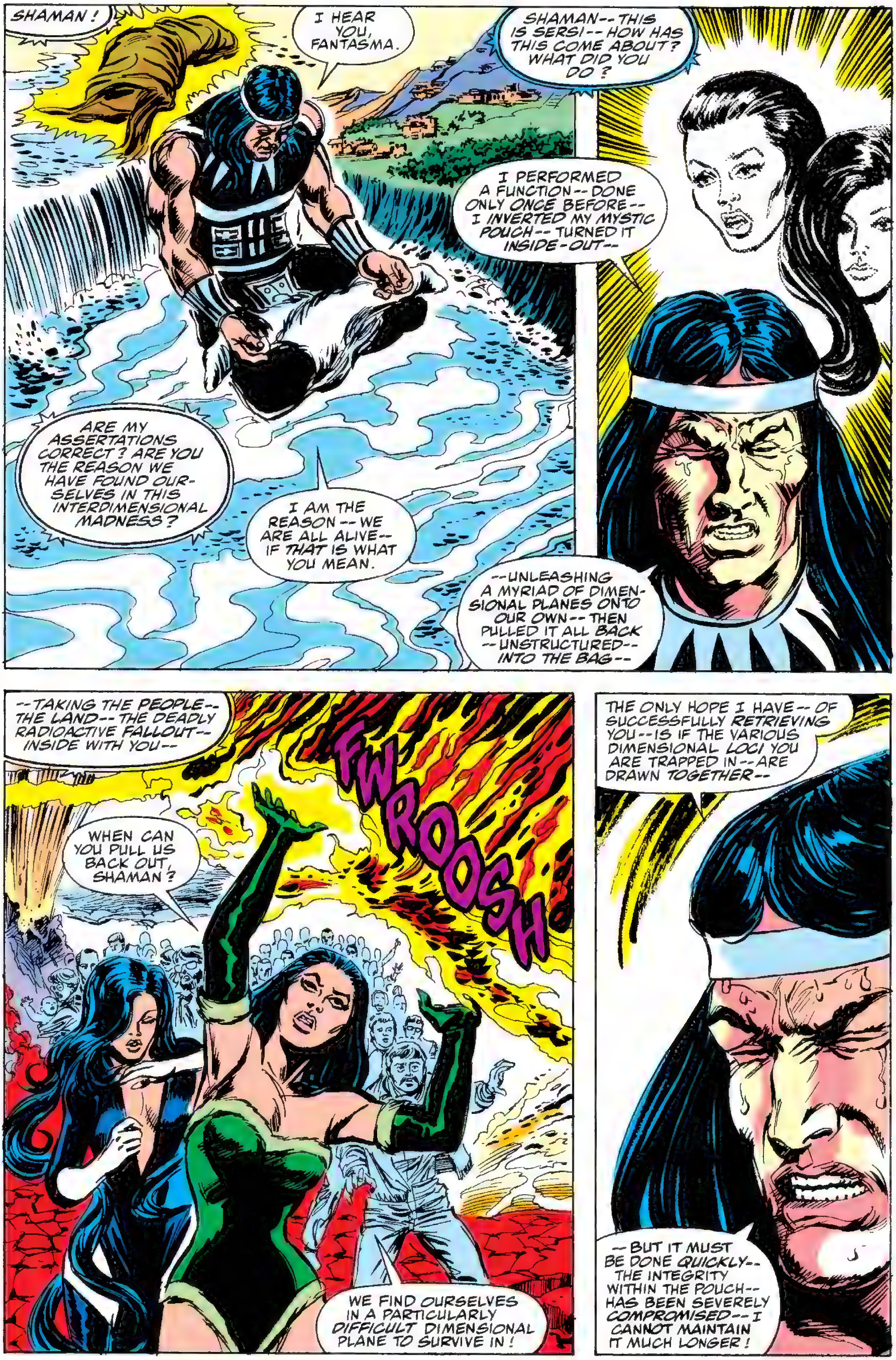
FABIAN NICIEZA WRITER | RIK LEVINS BREAKDOWNS | TOM PALMER FINISHES | BILL OAKLEY LETTERER | NEL YOMTOV COLORIST | HOWARD MACKIE EDITOR | TOM DEFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF

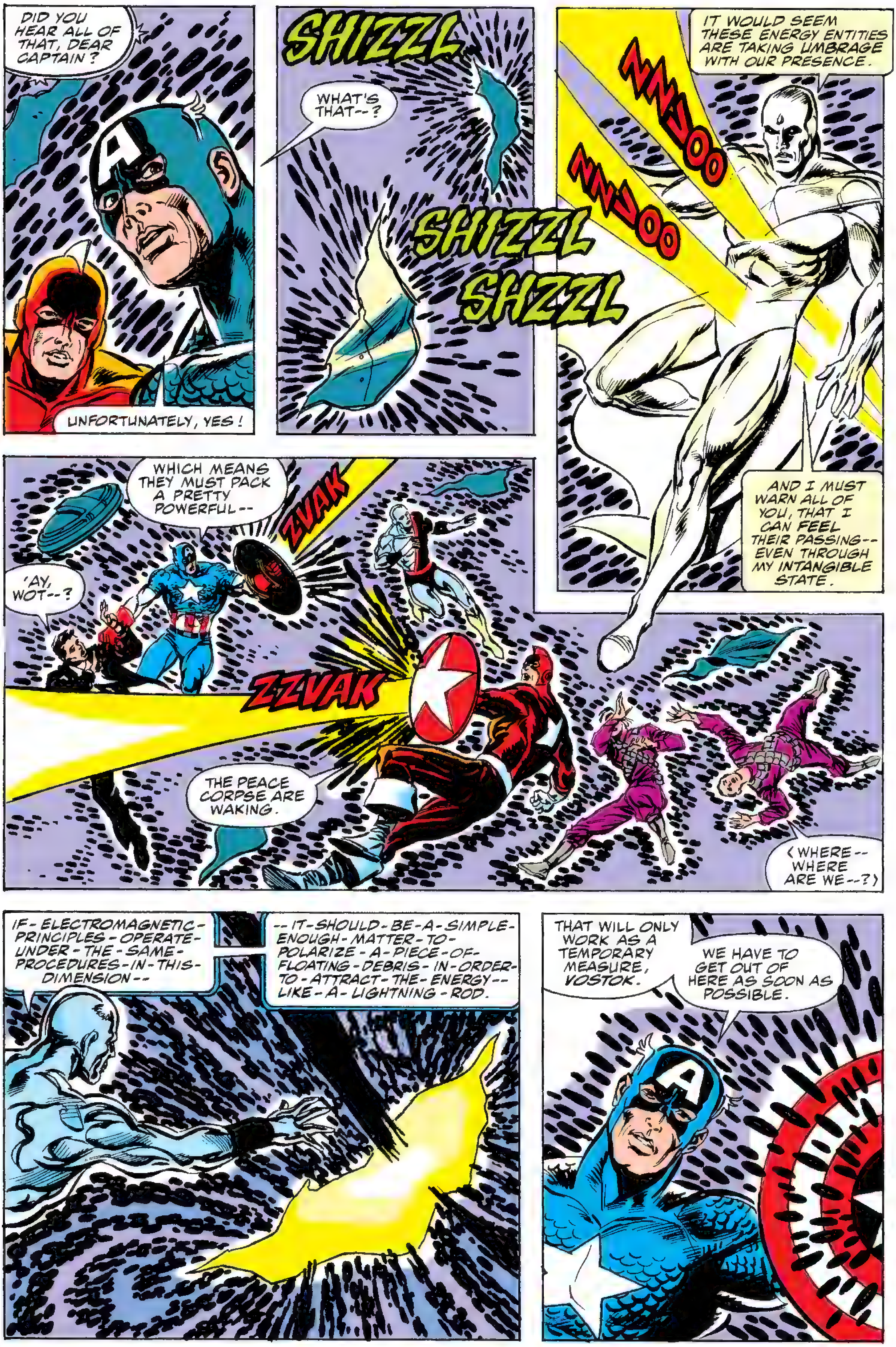

FLASHBACK: DETONATION PLUS ONE-TENTH OF A SECOND--
NO
DETONATION PLUS THREE-TENTHS OF A SECOND--
VRUMMM
DETONATION
PLUS
ONE
AND
THREE-TENTHS
OF
A
SECOND--
DETONATION PLUS TWO AND SIX-TENTHS OF A SECOND--

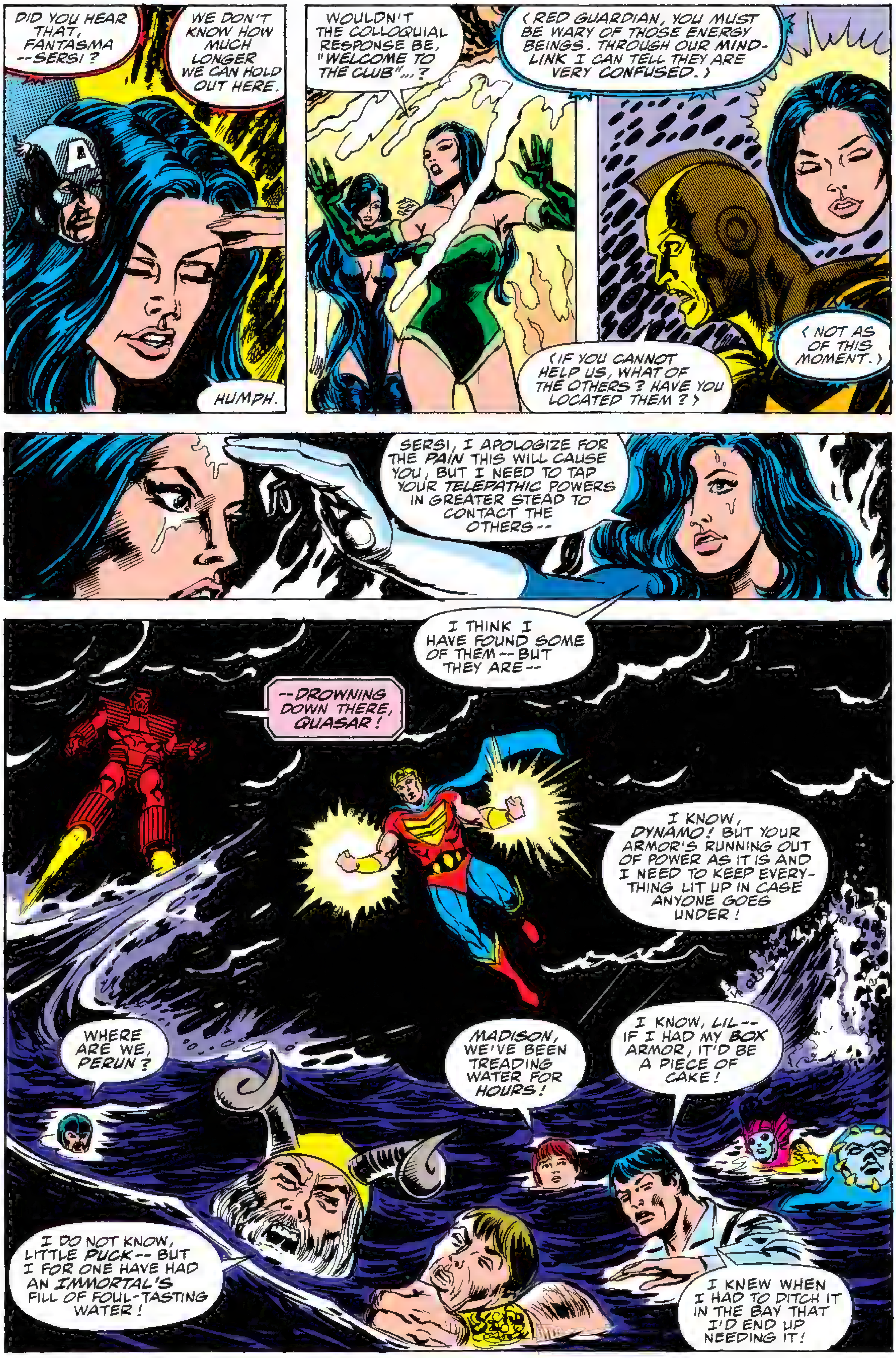

ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE ISLAND, IN PORT AU PORT BAY. DETONATION PLUS FOUR SECONDS--
NO
--PLUS FOUR AND ONE-TENTH OF A SECOND--
FWOOOOO
--PLUS EIGHT-TENTHS OF A SECOND--
NO
MAC
DETONATION PLUS FIVE SECONDS.
DETONATION PLUS TEN SECONDS.

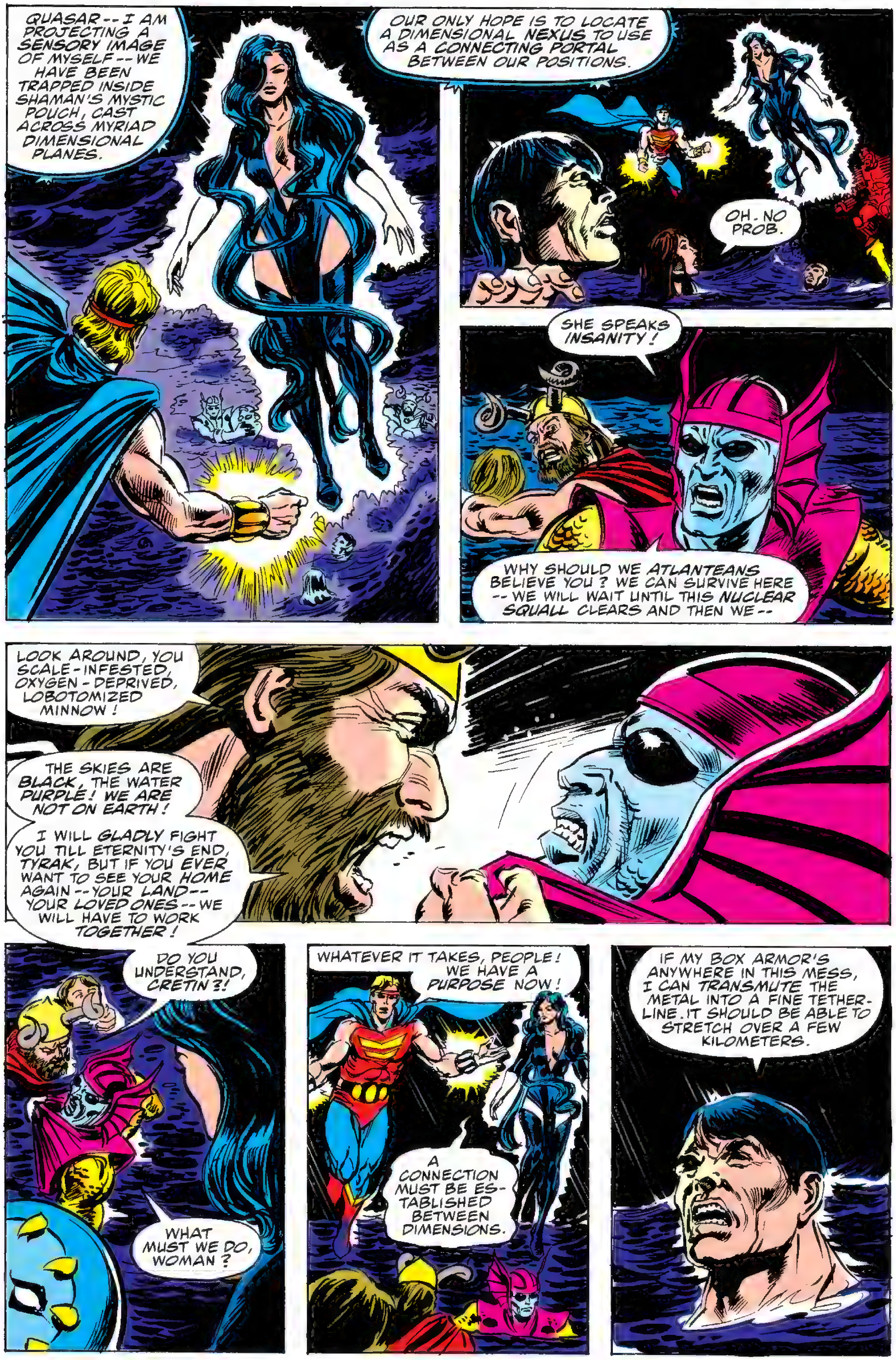

DETONATION PLUS FOURTEEN SECONDS.
NO
NO!!
WHA--
--FIRE --I'M ON FIRE--
--NO-- WHERE-- WHAT--? VISION--?
WE'RE ALIVE-- WHERE--WE WERE ON THE WATERWIND-- ALL OF US ARE ALIVE --BUT I FELT THE EXPLOSION--
HAVE TO GET MY BEARINGS. SUCK IT UP, SOLDIER.
RED GUARDIAN! CAN YOU HEAR ME?!
UGHHH
‹CAPTAIN AMERICA?›
‹WHAT HAPPENED? WHERE --OH, ENGLISH›-- I HEAR YOU!
I WILL TOSS TETHER-LINE FROM BELT-CLIP.
I HAVE IT! GOOD THROW!
WE SEEM TO BE IN SOME GRAVITY-FREE OTHER-DIMENSION.
BUT HOW?
IT SEEMS THAT THE REMNANTS OF THE WATERWIND AS WELL AS THE UNCONSCIOUS MEMBERS OF THE PEACE CORPSE HAVE JOINED US. EXCEPT FOR PROKVITCH AND STROKOV.
WE-SHOULD-ALSO-BE-AWARE-THAT-THE-FIELD-WE-FLOAT-IN-IS-BIOLOGICALLY-ACTIVE.
VOSTOK-- ARE YOU SAYING THESE ENERGY FORMS ARE ALIVE?
WAIT--
CAPTAIN--?
SOMEONE IS TELEPATHICALLY CONTACTING ME--

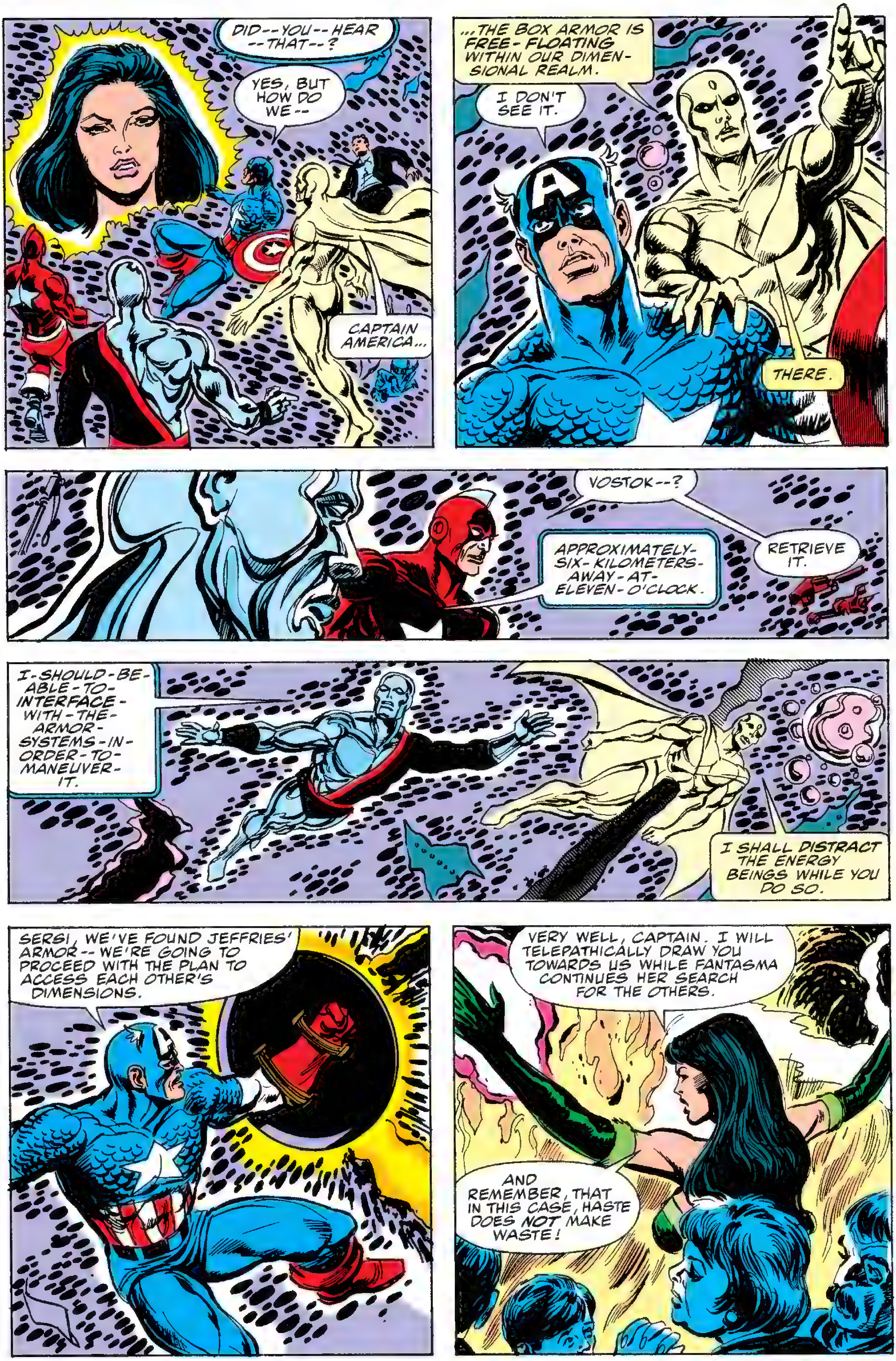

YOU'VE REACHED HIM? WHERE IS HE? IS HE ALL RIGHT?
SERSI, PLEASE -- IT'S HARD ENOUGH TO MAINTAIN CONTACT THROUGH THE DIMENSIONAL VORTICES--
CAPTAIN? THIS IS FANTASMA.
I CAN HEAR YOU-- VERY FAINTLY--
FIND OUT IF THERE'S ANY WAY THEY CAN GET US OUT OF HERE.
CALM YOURSELF, ETERNAL!
DON'T TALK TO ME THAT WAY, YOU HAGGLING WITCH!
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA OF THE STRAIN THAT MAINTAINING THIS PROTECTIVE FORCE FIELD AND LOWERING THE TEMPERATURE IN HERE IS TAKING ON ME?
WE ARE ALL BEING TAXED TO THE LIMITS OF OUR ABILITIES, AVENGER.
YOUR MOLECULAR RESTRUCTURING POWERS WILL HAVE TO ENDURE, AS WILL MY BIOFIELD MANIPULATIONS.
ANYTHING LESS THAN THAT WILL RESULT IN OUR DEATHS, AND I AM NOT QUITE YET READY TO DIE.
NOR AM I!
BUT IF WE DO NOT ACT SOON, THE OPTION MAY ESCAPE US!
I AM FAIRLY CERTAIN HOW THIS HAS HAPPENED TO US. LINK YOUR MIND WITH MINE AND ALLOW ME TO CONTACT--

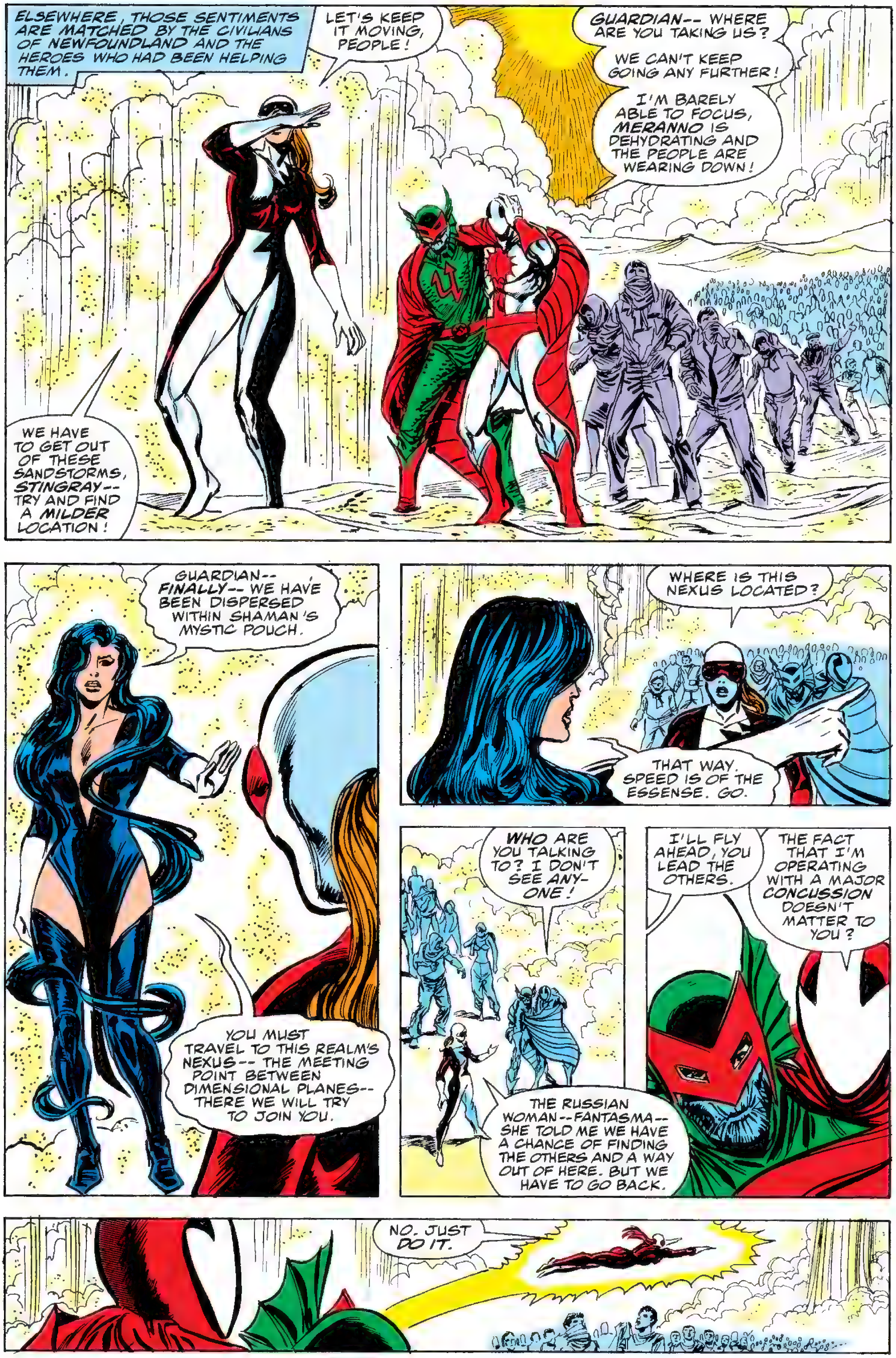

SHAMAN!
I HEAR YOU, FANTASMA.
ARE MY ASSERTATIONS CORRECT? ARE YOU THE REASON WE HAVE FOUND OURSELVES IN THIS INTERDIMENSIONAL MADNESS?
I AM THE REASON -- WE ARE ALL ALIVE-- IF *THAT* IS WHAT YOU MEAN.
SHAMAN-- THIS IS SERSI-- HOW HAS THIS COME ABOUT? WHAT DID YOU DO?
I PERFORMED A FUNCTION-- DONE ONLY *ONCE* BEFORE-- I *INVERTED* MY *MYSTIC POUCH*-- TURNED IT *INSIDE-OUT*--
--UNLEASHING A MYRIAD OF DIMENSIONAL PLANES ONTO OUR OWN-- THEN PULLED IT ALL *BACK* --UNSTRUCTURED-- *INTO THE BAG*--
--TAKING THE PEOPLE-- *THE LAND*-- THE DEADLY RADIOACTIVE *FALLOUT*-- INSIDE WITH YOU--
WHEN CAN YOU PULL US BACK OUT, SHAMAN?
FWROOSH
WE FIND OURSELVES IN A PARTICULARLY *DIFFICULT* DIMENSIONAL PLANE TO SURVIVE IN!
THE ONLY HOPE I HAVE-- OF SUCCESSFULLY *RETRIEVING* YOU--IS IF THE VARIOUS DIMENSIONAL *LOCI* YOU ARE TRAPPED IN--ARE DRAWN *TOGETHER*--
--BUT IT MUST BE DONE *QUICKLY*-- THE INTEGRITY WITHIN THE POUCH-- HAS BEEN SEVERELY *COMPROMISED*--I CANNOT MAINTAIN IT MUCH LONGER!

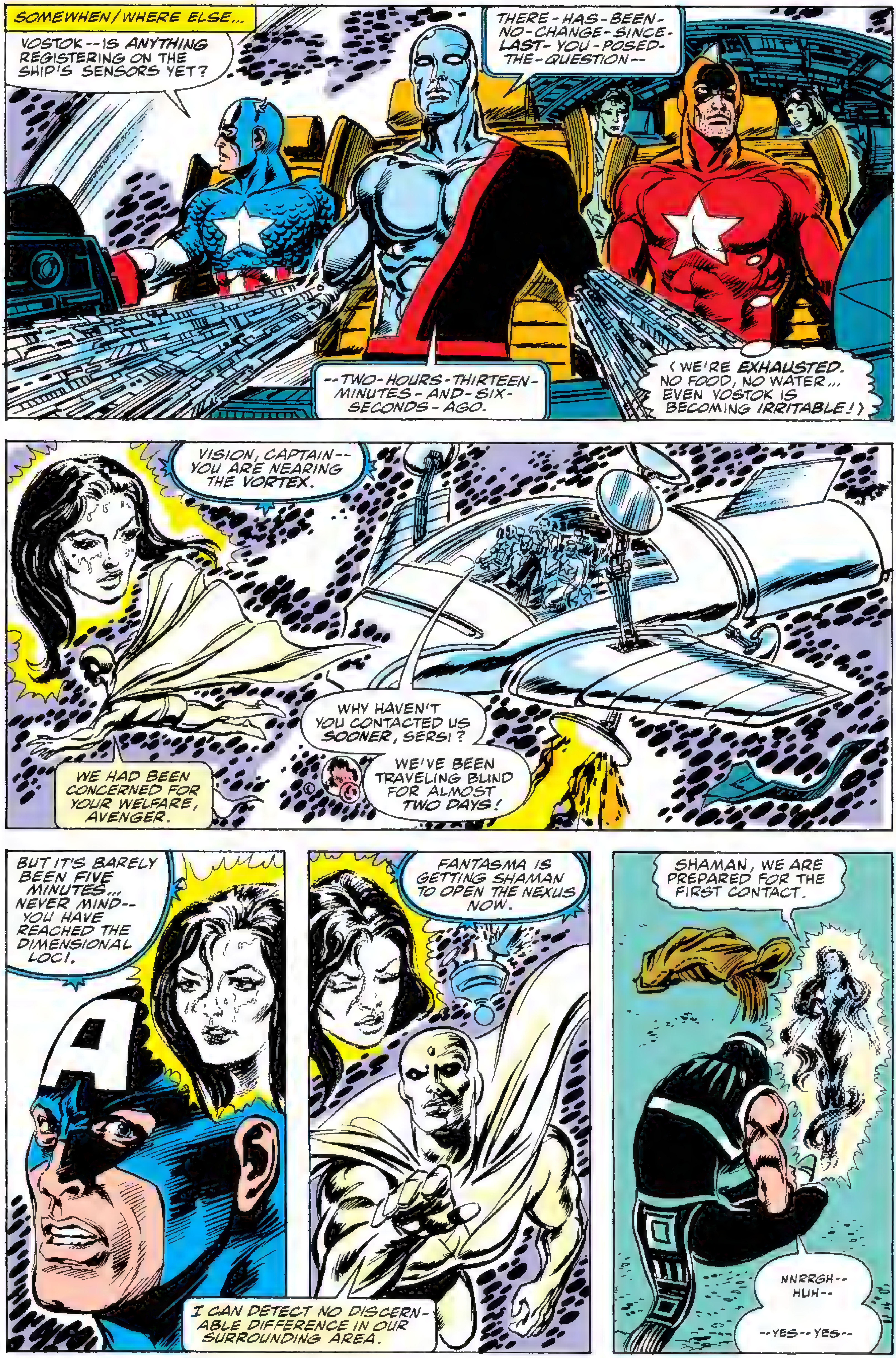

DID YOU HEAR ALL OF THAT, DEAR CAPTAIN?
UNFORTUNATELY, YES!
SHIZZL
WHAT'S THAT--?
SHIZZL
SHZZL
IT WOULD SEEM THESE ENERGY ENTITIES ARE TAKING UMBRAGE WITH OUR PRESENCE.
NNJOO
NNJOO
AND I MUST WARN ALL OF YOU, THAT I CAN FEEL THEIR PASSING--EVEN THROUGH MY INTANGIBLE STATE.
WHICH MEANS THEY MUST PACK A PRETTY POWERFUL--
ZVAK
'AY, WOT--?
ZZVAK
THE PEACE CORPSE ARE WAKING.
‹WHERE--WHERE ARE WE--?›
IF-ELECTROMAGNETIC-PRINCIPLES-OPERATE-UNDER-THE-SAME-PROCEDURES-IN-THIS-DIMENSION--
--IT-SHOULD-BE-A-SIMPLE-ENOUGH-MATTER-TO-POLARIZE-A-PIECE-OF-FLOATING-DEBRIS-IN-ORDER-TO-ATTRACT-THE-ENERGY--LIKE-A-LIGHTNING-ROD.
THAT WILL ONLY WORK AS A TEMPORARY MEASURE, VOSTOK.
WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

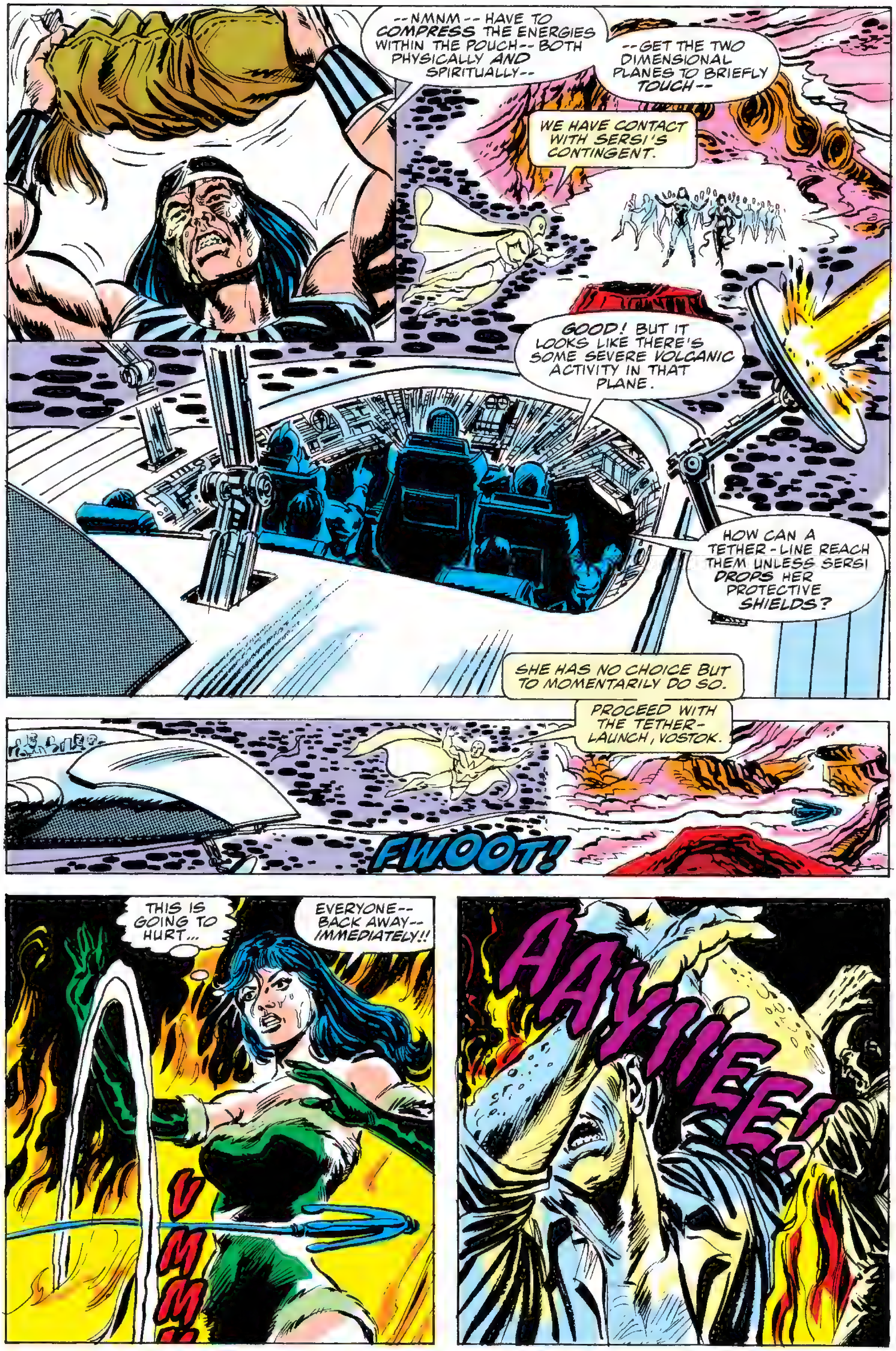

DID YOU HEAR THAT, FANTASMA --SERSI?
WE DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH LONGER WE CAN HOLD OUT HERE.
HUMPH.
WOULDN'T THE COLLOQUIAL RESPONSE BE, "WELCOME TO THE CLUB"...?
‹RED GUARDIAN, YOU MUST BE WARY OF THOSE ENERGY BEINGS. THROUGH OUR MIND-LINK I CAN TELL THEY ARE VERY CONFUSED.›
‹IF YOU CANNOT HELP US, WHAT OF THE OTHERS? HAVE YOU LOCATED THEM?›
‹NOT AS OF THIS MOMENT.›
SERSI, I APOLOGIZE FOR THE PAIN THIS WILL CAUSE YOU, BUT I NEED TO TAP YOUR TELEPATHIC POWERS IN GREATER STEAD TO CONTACT THE OTHERS--
I THINK I HAVE FOUND SOME OF THEM--BUT THEY ARE--
--DROWNING DOWN THERE, QUASAR!
I KNOW, DYNAMO! BUT YOUR ARMOR'S RUNNING OUT OF POWER AS IT IS AND I NEED TO KEEP EVERYTHING LIT UP IN CASE ANYONE GOES UNDER!
WHERE ARE WE, PERUN?
MADISON, WE'VE BEEN TREADING WATER FOR HOURS!
I KNOW, LIL--IF I HAD MY BOX ARMOR, IT'D BE A PIECE OF CAKE!
I DO NOT KNOW, LITTLE PUCK--BUT I FOR ONE HAVE HAD AN IMMORTAL'S FILL OF FOUL-TASTING WATER!
I KNEW WHEN I HAD TO DITCH IT IN THE BAY THAT I'D END UP NEEDING IT!

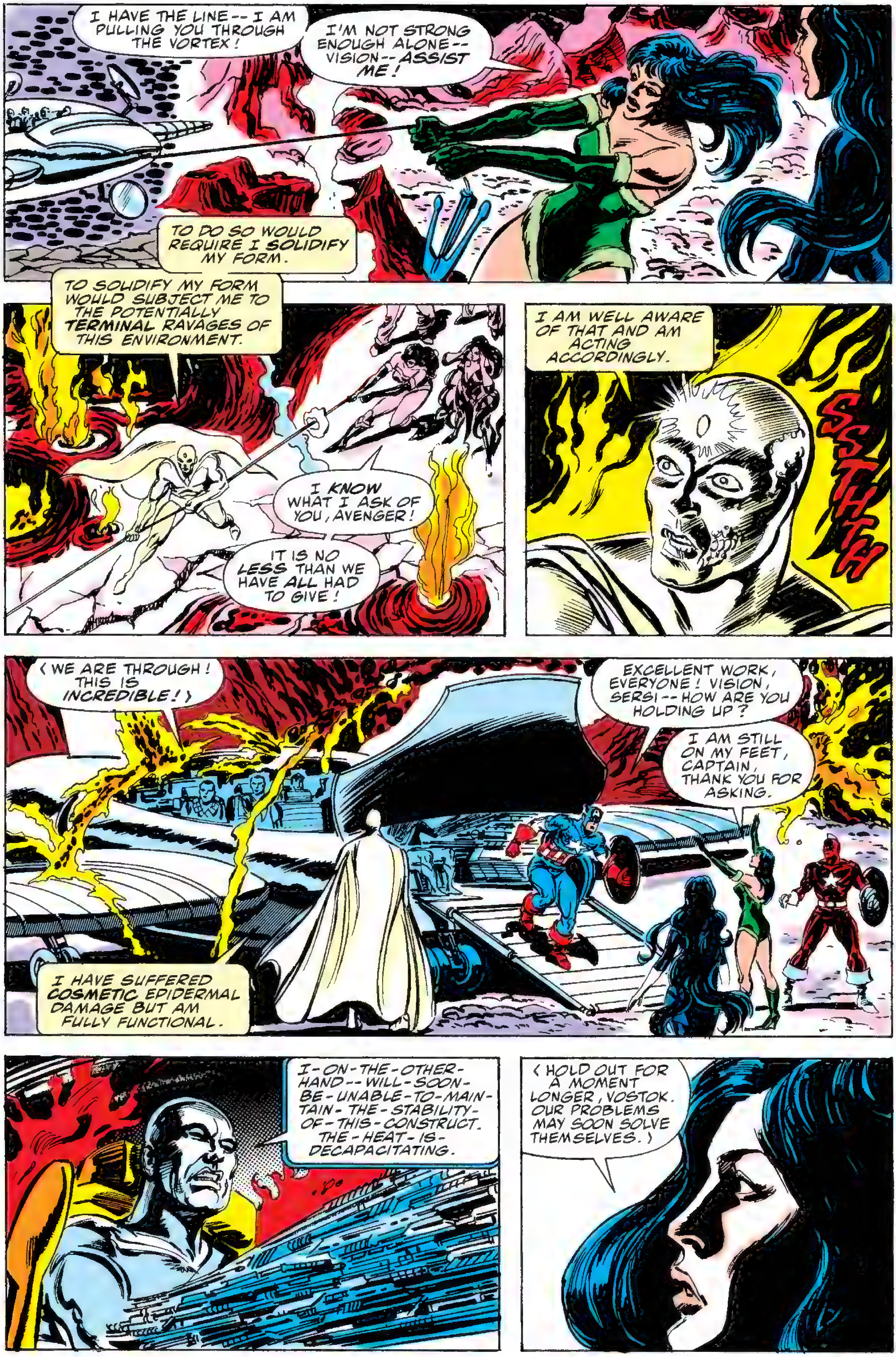

QUASAR -- I AM PROJECTING A SENSORY IMAGE OF MYSELF -- WE HAVE BEEN TRAPPED INSIDE SHAMAN'S MYSTIC POUCH, CAST ACROSS MYRIAD DIMENSIONAL PLANES.
OUR ONLY HOPE IS TO LOCATE A DIMENSIONAL NEXUS TO USE AS A CONNECTING PORTAL BETWEEN OUR POSITIONS.
OH. NO PROB.
SHE SPEAKS INSANITY!
WHY SHOULD WE ATLANTEANS BELIEVE YOU? WE CAN SURVIVE HERE -- WE WILL WAIT UNTIL THIS NUCLEAR SQUALL CLEARS AND THEN WE --
LOOK AROUND, YOU SCALE-INFESTED, OXYGEN-DEPRIVED, LOBOTOMIZED MINNOW!
THE SKIES ARE BLACK, THE WATER PURPLE! WE ARE NOT ON EARTH!
I WILL GLADLY FIGHT YOU TILL ETERNITY'S END, TYRAK, BUT IF YOU EVER WANT TO SEE YOUR HOME AGAIN -- YOUR LAND -- YOUR LOVED ONES -- WE WILL HAVE TO WORK TOGETHER!
DO YOU UNDERSTAND, CRETIN?!
WHAT MUST WE DO, WOMAN?
WHATEVER IT TAKES, PEOPLE! WE HAVE A PURPOSE NOW!
A CONNECTION MUST BE ESTABLISHED BETWEEN DIMENSIONS.
IF MY BOX ARMOR'S ANYWHERE IN THIS MESS, I CAN TRANSMUTE THE METAL INTO A FINE TETHER-LINE. IT SHOULD BE ABLE TO STRETCH OVER A FEW KILOMETERS.

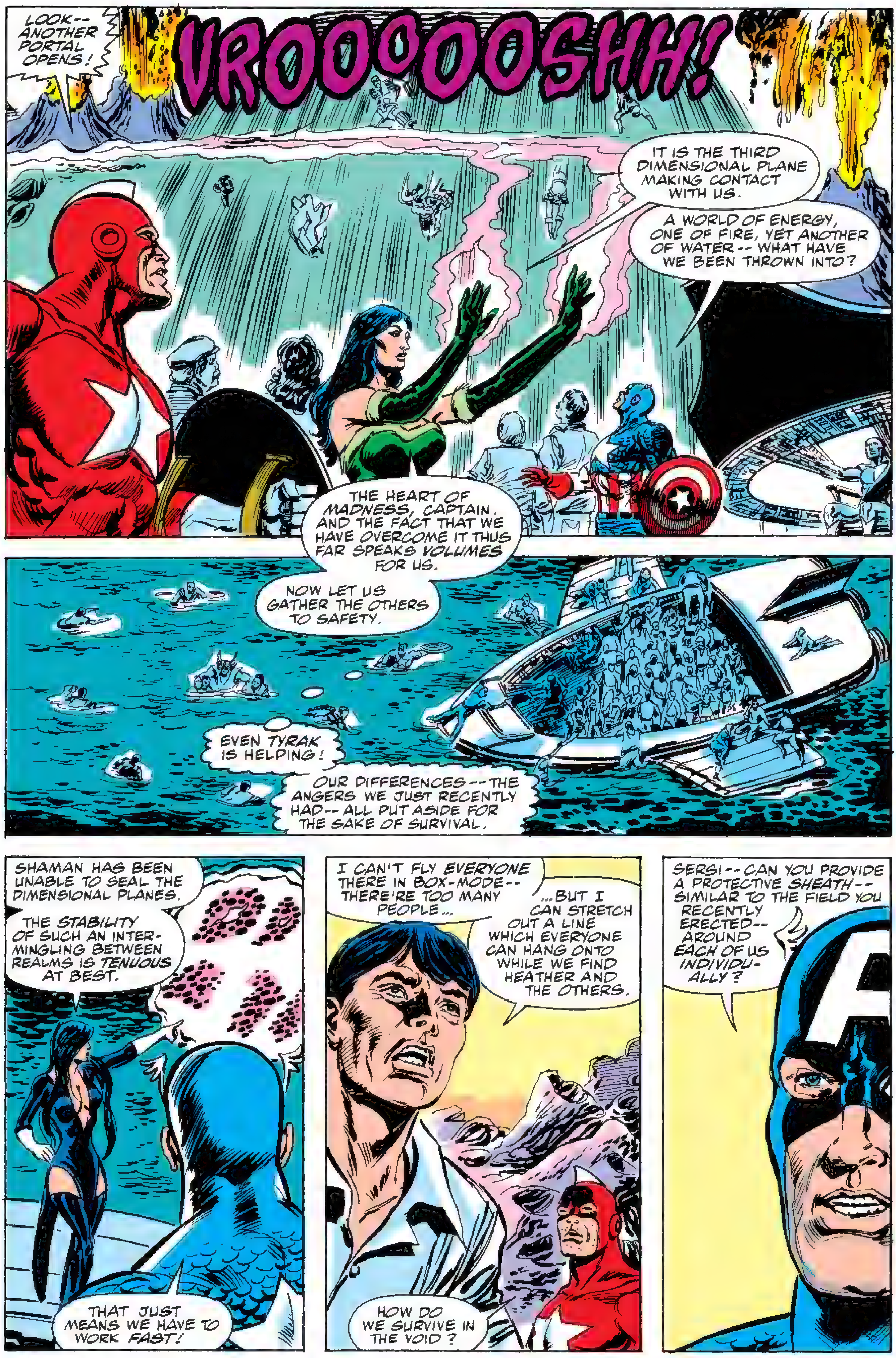

DID--YOU--HEAR --THAT--?
YES, BUT HOW DO WE--
CAPTAIN AMERICA...
...THE BOX ARMOR IS FREE-FLOATING WITHIN OUR DIMENSIONAL REALM.
I DON'T SEE IT.
THERE.
VOSTOK--?
RETRIEVE IT.
APPROXIMATELY-SIX-KILOMETERS-AWAY-AT-ELEVEN-O'CLOCK.
I-SHOULD-BE-ABLE-TO-INTERFACE-WITH-THE-ARMOR-SYSTEMS-IN-ORDER-TO-MANEUVER-IT.
I SHALL DISTRACT THE ENERGY BEINGS WHILE YOU DO SO.
SERSI, WE'VE FOUND JEFFRIES' ARMOR-- WE'RE GOING TO PROCEED WITH THE PLAN TO ACCESS EACH OTHER'S DIMENSIONS.
VERY WELL, CAPTAIN. I WILL TELEPATHICALLY DRAW YOU TOWARDS US WHILE FANTASMA CONTINUES HER SEARCH FOR THE OTHERS.
AND REMEMBER, THAT IN THIS CASE, HASTE DOES *NOT* MAKE WASTE!


ELSEWHERE, THOSE SENTIMENTS ARE MATCHED BY THE CIVILIANS OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND THE HEROES WHO HAD BEEN HELPING THEM.
LET'S KEEP IT MOVING, PEOPLE!
GUARDIAN-- WHERE ARE YOU TAKING US?
WE CAN'T KEEP GOING ANY FURTHER!
I'M BARELY ABLE TO FOCUS, MERANNO IS DEHYDRATING AND THE PEOPLE ARE WEARING DOWN!
WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF THESE SANDSTORMS, STINGRAY-- TRY AND FIND A MILDER LOCATION!
GUARDIAN-- FINALLY-- WE HAVE BEEN DISPERSED WITHIN SHAMAN'S MYSTIC POUCH.
YOU MUST TRAVEL TO THIS REALM'S NEXUS-- THE MEETING POINT BETWEEN DIMENSIONAL PLANES-- THERE WE WILL TRY TO JOIN YOU.
WHERE IS THIS NEXUS LOCATED?
THAT WAY. SPEED IS OF THE ESSENSE. GO.
WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO? I DON'T SEE ANY-ONE!
THE RUSSIAN WOMAN--FANTASMA-- SHE TOLD ME WE HAVE A CHANCE OF FINDING THE OTHERS AND A WAY OUT OF HERE. BUT WE HAVE TO GO BACK.
I'LL FLY AHEAD, YOU LEAD THE OTHERS.
THE FACT THAT I'M OPERATING WITH A MAJOR CONCUSSION DOESN'T MATTER TO YOU?
NO. JUST DO IT.

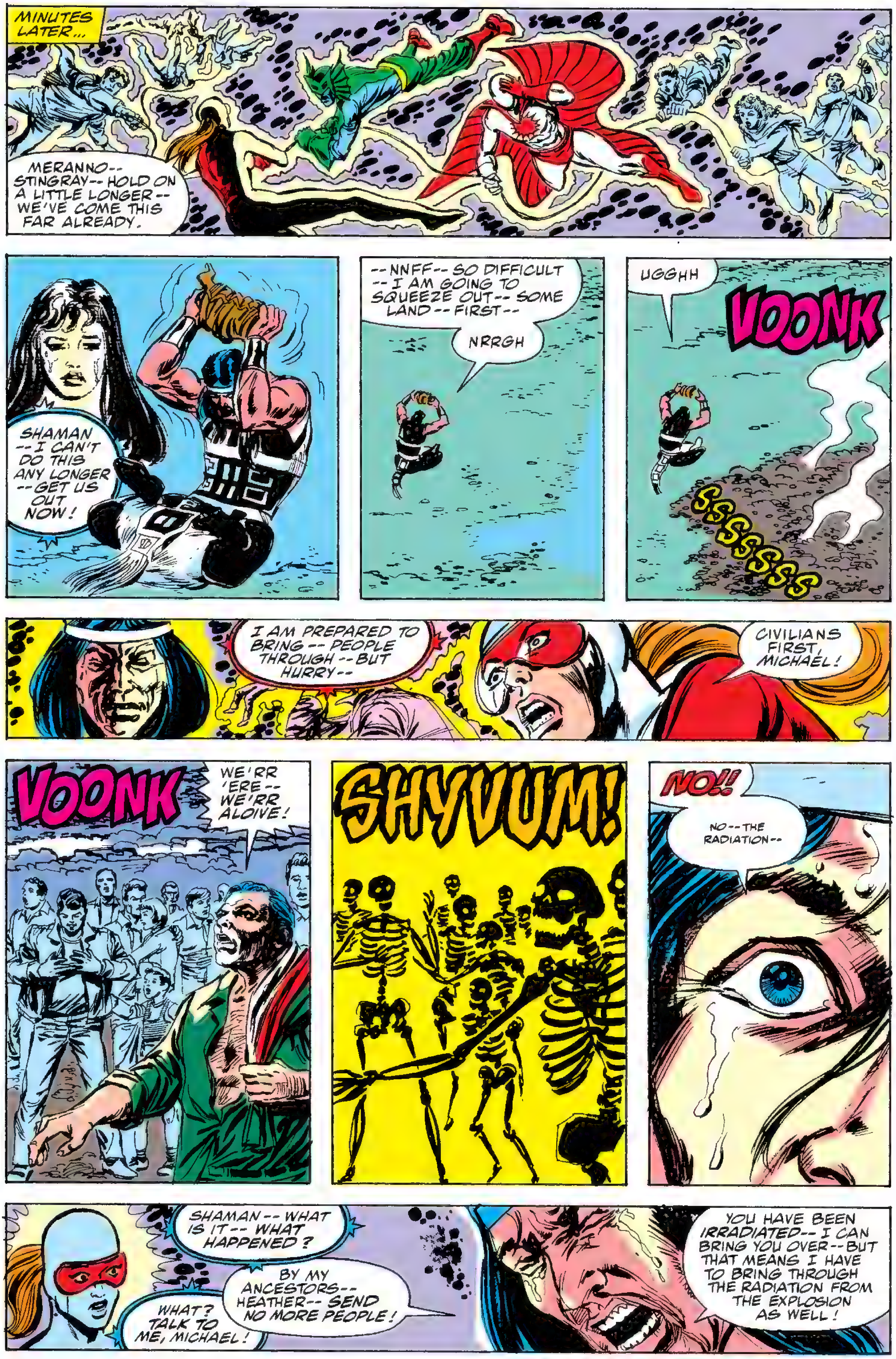

SOMEWHEN/WHERE ELSE...
VOSTOK--IS ANYTHING REGISTERING ON THE SHIP'S SENSORS YET?
THERE-HAS-BEEN-NO-CHANGE-SINCE-LAST-YOU-POSED-THE-QUESTION--
--TWO-HOURS-THIRTEEN-MINUTES-AND-SIX-SECONDS-AGO.
‹WE'RE EXHAUSTED. NO FOOD, NO WATER... EVEN VOSTOK IS BECOMING IRRITABLE!›
VISION, CAPTAIN--YOU ARE NEARING THE VORTEX.
WHY HAVEN'T YOU CONTACTED US SOONER, SERSI?
WE'VE BEEN TRAVELING BLIND FOR ALMOST TWO DAYS!
WE HAD BEEN CONCERNED FOR YOUR WELFARE, AVENGER.
BUT IT'S BARELY BEEN FIVE MINUTES... NEVER MIND--YOU HAVE REACHED THE DIMENSIONAL LOCI.
FANTASMA IS GETTING SHAMAN TO OPEN THE NEXUS NOW.
I CAN DETECT NO DISCERNABLE DIFFERENCE IN OUR SURROUNDING AREA.
SHAMAN, WE ARE PREPARED FOR THE FIRST CONTACT.
NNRRGH--HUH--
--YES--YES--

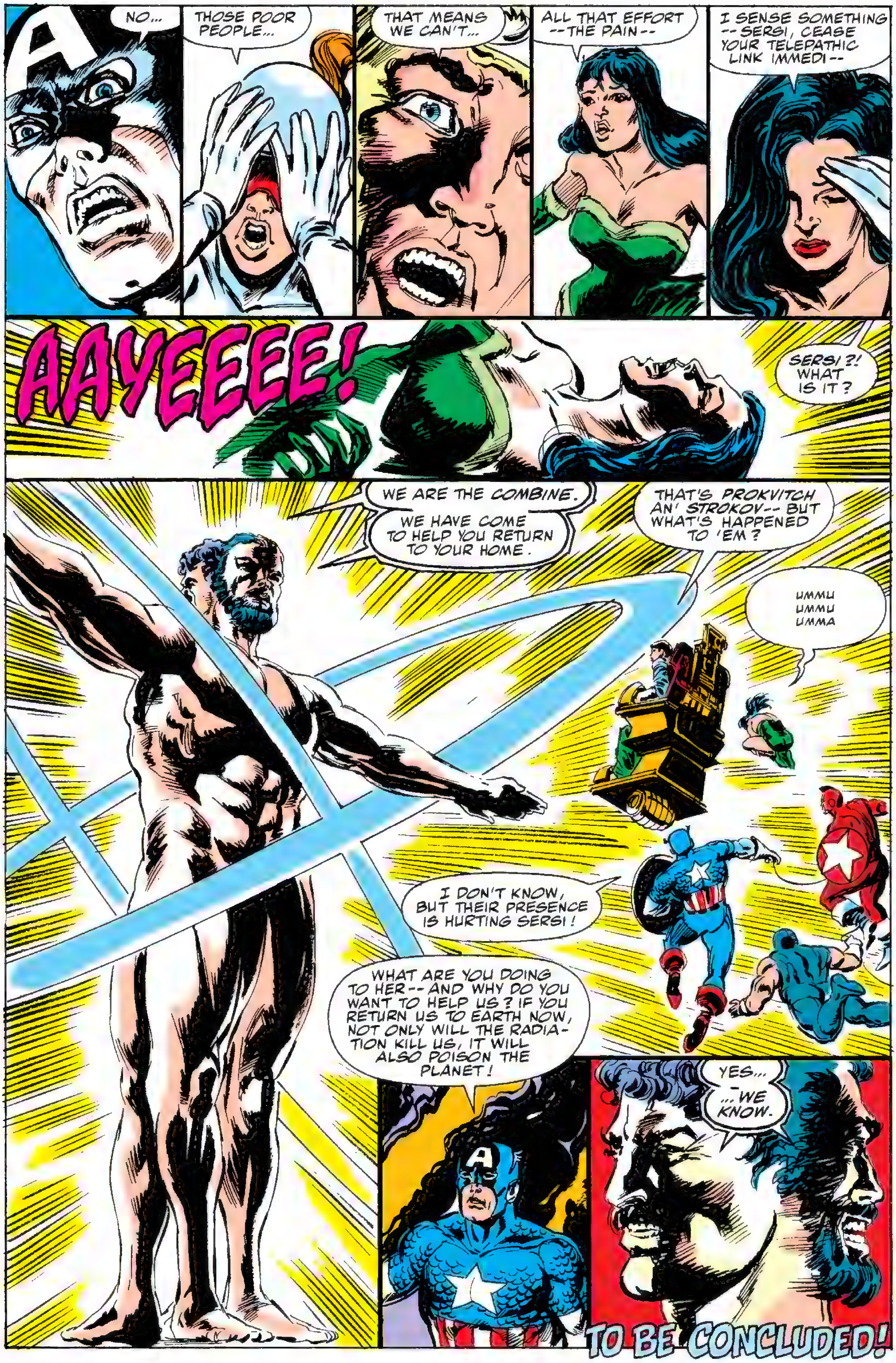

--NMNM-- HAVE TO *COMPRESS* THE ENERGIES WITHIN THE POUCH-- BOTH PHYSICALLY *AND* SPIRITUALLY--
--GET THE TWO DIMENSIONAL PLANES TO BRIEFLY *TOUCH*--
WE HAVE CONTACT WITH SERSI'S CONTINGENT.
GOOD! BUT IT LOOKS LIKE THERE'S SOME SEVERE *VOLCANIC* ACTIVITY IN THAT PLANE.
HOW CAN A TETHER-LINE REACH THEM UNLESS SERSI *DROPS* HER PROTECTIVE *SHIELDS?*
SHE HAS NO CHOICE BUT TO MOMENTARILY DO SO.
PROCEED WITH THE TETHER-LAUNCH, VOSTOK.
FWOOT!
THIS IS GOING TO HURT...
EVERYONE-- BACK AWAY-- *IMMEDIATELY!!*
VMMM
AAYIIEE!

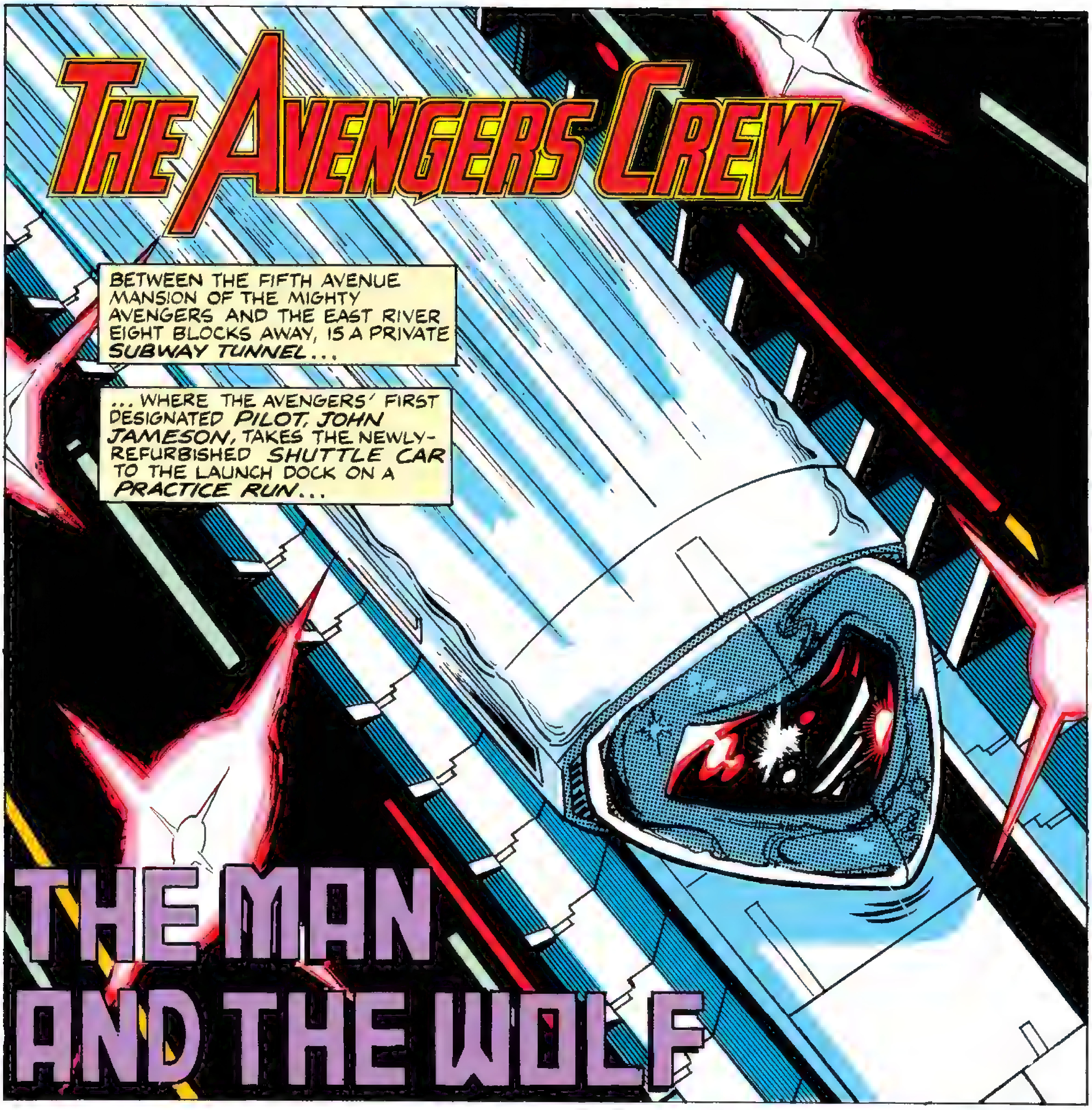

I HAVE THE LINE -- I AM PULLING YOU THROUGH THE VORTEX!
I'M NOT STRONG ENOUGH ALONE -- VISION -- ASSIST ME!
TO DO SO WOULD REQUIRE I SOLIDIFY MY FORM.
TO SOLIDIFY MY FORM WOULD SUBJECT ME TO THE POTENTIALLY TERMINAL RAVAGES OF THIS ENVIRONMENT.
I KNOW WHAT I ASK OF YOU, AVENGER!
IT IS NO LESS THAN WE HAVE ALL HAD TO GIVE!
I AM WELL AWARE OF THAT AND AM ACTING ACCORDINGLY.
SSTHHH
‹WE ARE THROUGH! THIS IS INCREDIBLE!›
EXCELLENT WORK, EVERYONE! VISION, SERSI -- HOW ARE YOU HOLDING UP?
I AM STILL ON MY FEET, CAPTAIN, THANK YOU FOR ASKING.
I HAVE SUFFERED COSMETIC EPIDERMAL DAMAGE BUT AM FULLY FUNCTIONAL.
I-ON-THE-OTHER-HAND--WILL-SOON-BE-UNABLE-TO-MAINTAIN-THE-STABILITY-OF-THIS-CONSTRUCT. THE-HEAT-IS-DECAPACITATING.
‹HOLD OUT FOR A MOMENT LONGER, VOSTOK. OUR PROBLEMS MAY SOON SOLVE THEMSELVES.›

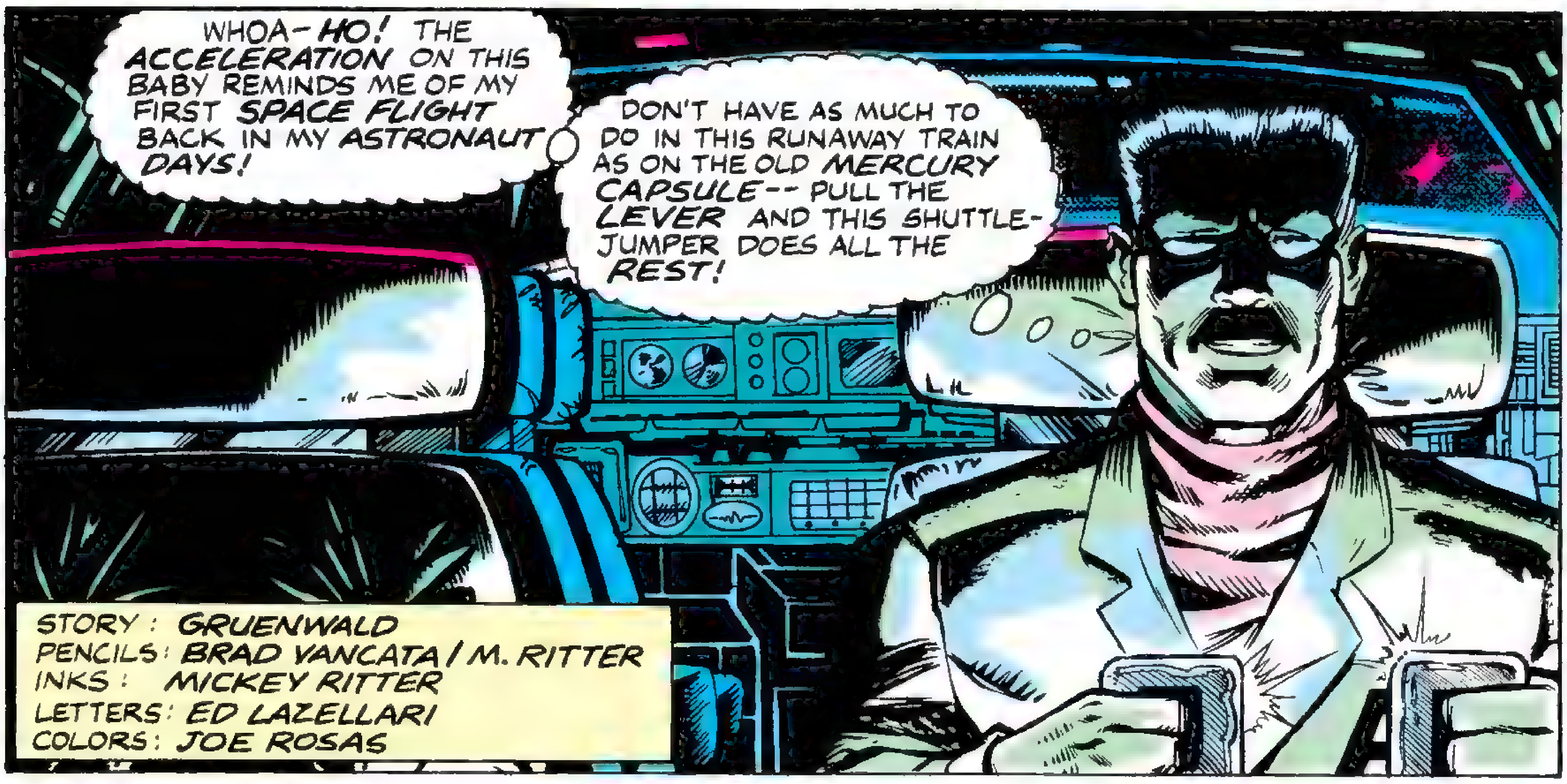

LOOK-- ANOTHER PORTAL OPENS!
VROOOOOOSHH!
IT IS THE THIRD DIMENSIONAL PLANE MAKING CONTACT WITH US.
A WORLD OF ENERGY, ONE OF FIRE, YET ANOTHER OF WATER -- WHAT HAVE WE BEEN THROWN INTO?
THE HEART OF MADNESS, CAPTAIN. AND THE FACT THAT WE HAVE OVERCOME IT THUS FAR SPEAKS VOLUMES FOR US.
NOW LET US GATHER THE OTHERS TO SAFETY.
EVEN TYRAK IS HELPING!
OUR DIFFERENCES -- THE ANGERS WE JUST RECENTLY HAD -- ALL PUT ASIDE FOR THE SAKE OF SURVIVAL.
SHAMAN HAS BEEN UNABLE TO SEAL THE DIMENSIONAL PLANES.
THE STABILITY OF SUCH AN INTER-MINGLING BETWEEN REALMS IS TENUOUS AT BEST.
THAT JUST MEANS WE HAVE TO WORK FAST!
I CAN'T FLY EVERYONE THERE IN BOX-MODE -- THERE'RE TOO MANY PEOPLE...
...BUT I CAN STRETCH OUT A LINE WHICH EVERYONE CAN HANG ONTO WHILE WE FIND HEATHER AND THE OTHERS.
HOW DO WE SURVIVE IN THE VOID?
SERSI -- CAN YOU PROVIDE A PROTECTIVE SHEATH -- SIMILAR TO THE FIELD YOU RECENTLY ERECTED -- AROUND EACH OF US INDIVIDU-ALLY?

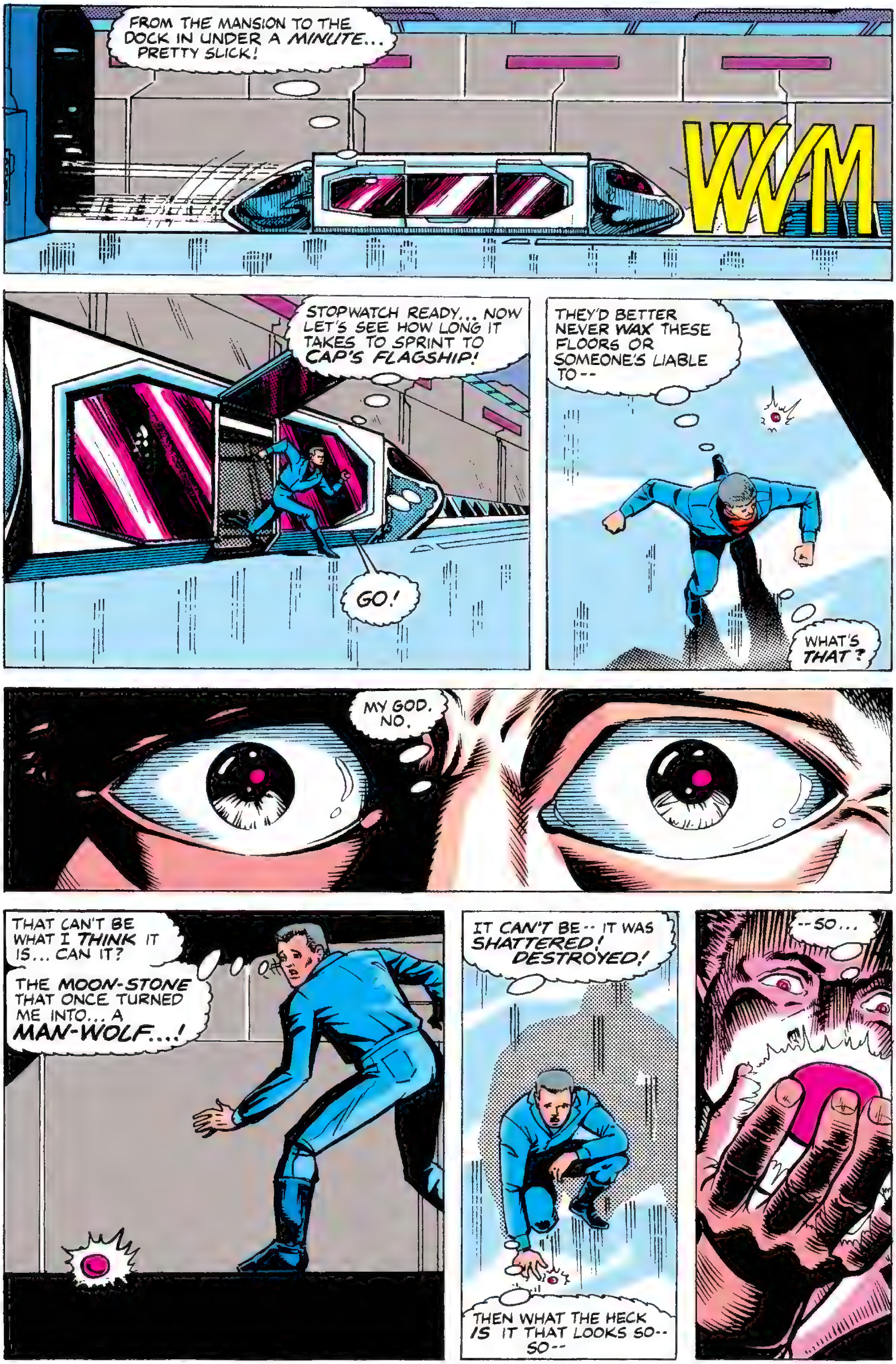
AND STILL TELEPATHICALLY SCAN FOR GUARDIAN'S NEXUS?
I BELIEVE I CAN, CAPTAIN. JUST BE CERTAIN MY *FUNERAL* IS A *LAVISH* ONE UPON YOUR RETURN TO EARTH.
TWENTY TENSE MINUTES LATER...
AS HARD AS IT IS TO BELIEVE, WE ARE DOING IT!
PIECEACAKE, DYNAMO. THE ANCHOR IN THE BACK IS STEADY AN' I STILL GOT ENOUGH LINE LEFT FOR ABOUT HALF A KILOMETER.
HANG ON, PEOPLE-- WE'RE GETTING CLOSE!
SERSI--?
GIVE THEM HOPE FIRST, THEN ASK ME TO PROVIDE IT?
NICE STRATEGY-- BUT YES, WE *ARE* CLOSE...
THERE'S SOME MOVEMENT UP AHEAD-- IT'S SHOWIN' UP ON INFRA-RED SCANS AND E-M TRACES.
I SEE THEM!

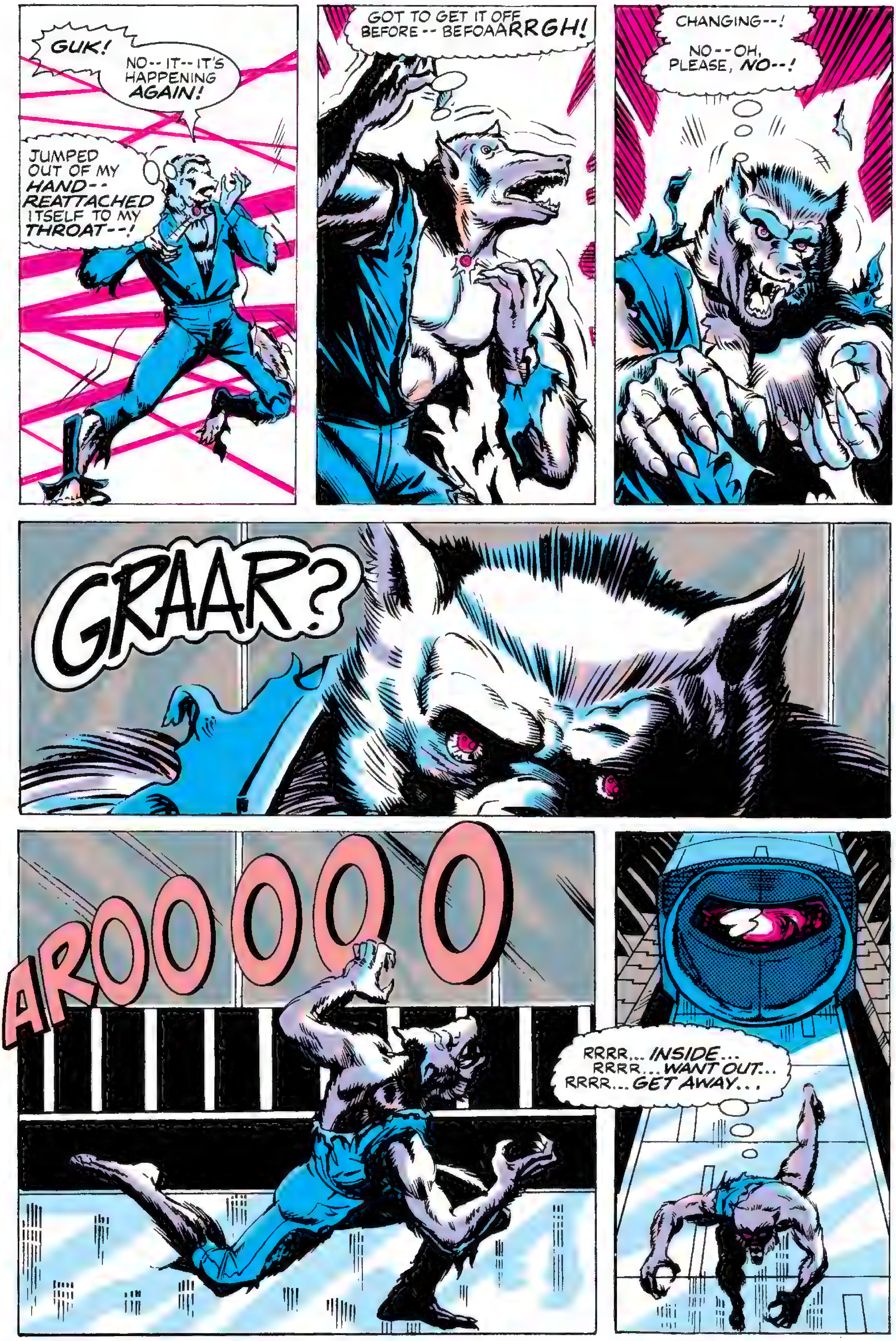

MINUTES LATER...
MERANNO-- STINGRAY-- HOLD ON A LITTLE LONGER-- WE'VE COME THIS FAR ALREADY.
SHAMAN --I CAN'T DO THIS ANY LONGER --GET US OUT NOW!
--NNFF-- SO DIFFICULT -- I AM GOING TO SQUEEZE OUT-- SOME LAND -- FIRST--
NRRGH
UGGHH
VOONK
SSSSSSS
I AM PREPARED TO BRING -- PEOPLE THROUGH -- BUT HURRY--
CIVILIANS FIRST, MICHAEL!
VOONK
WE'RR 'ERE-- WE'RR ALOIVE!
SHYVUM!
NO!!
NO -- THE RADIATION --
SHAMAN -- WHAT IS IT -- WHAT HAPPENED?
WHAT? TALK TO ME, MICHAEL!
BY MY ANCESTORS-- HEATHER-- SEND NO MORE PEOPLE!
YOU HAVE BEEN IRRADIATED-- I CAN BRING YOU OVER--BUT THAT MEANS I HAVE TO BRING THROUGH THE RADIATION FROM THE EXPLOSION AS WELL!

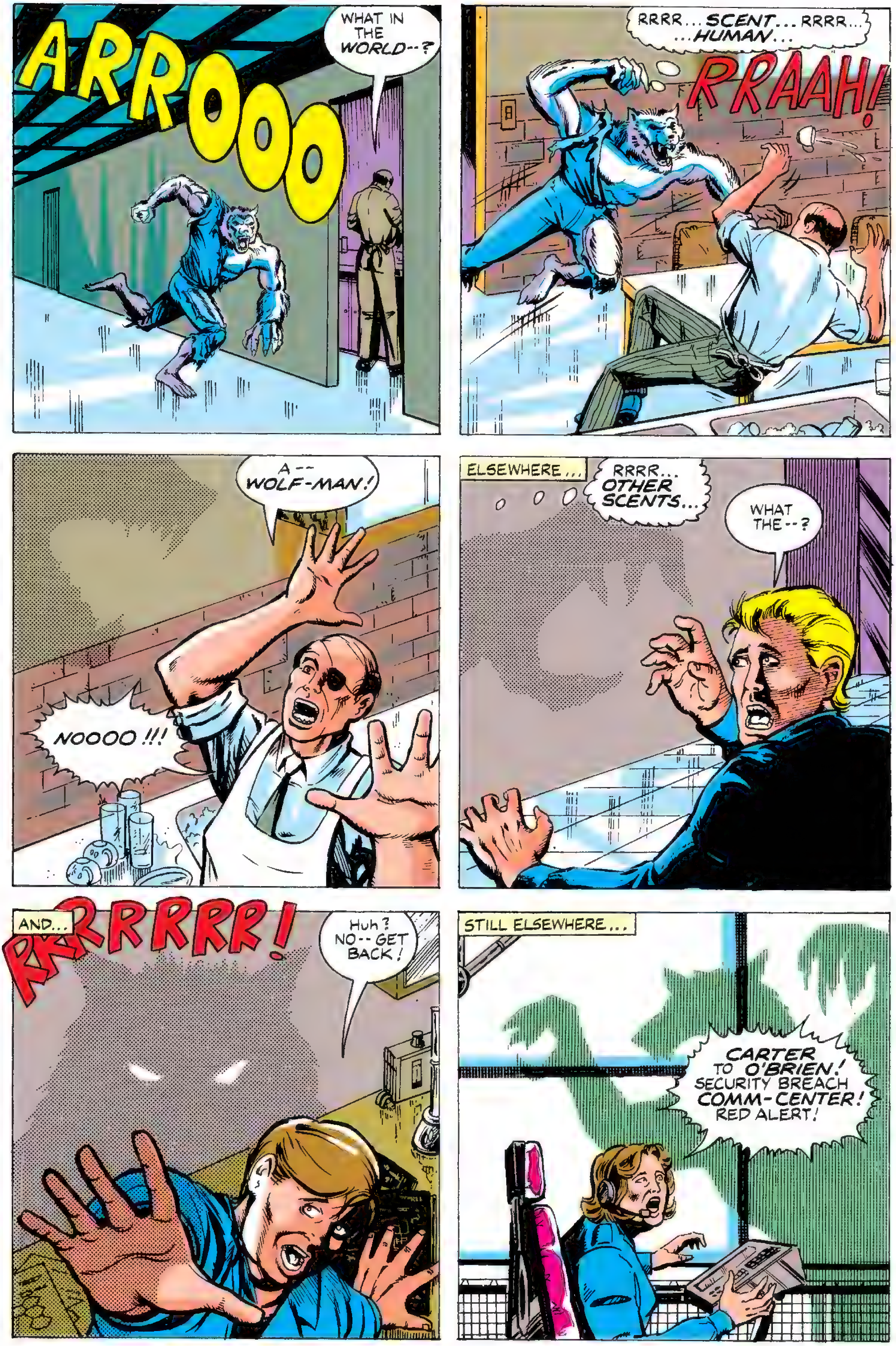

NO...
THOSE POOR PEOPLE...
THAT MEANS WE CAN'T...
ALL THAT EFFORT --THE PAIN--
I SENSE SOMETHING --SERSI, CEASE YOUR TELEPATHIC LINK IMMEDI--
AAYEEEE!
SERSI?! WHAT IS IT?
WE ARE THE COMBINE.
WE HAVE COME TO HELP YOU RETURN TO YOUR HOME.
THAT'S PROKVITCH AN' STROKOV-- BUT WHAT'S HAPPENED TO 'EM?
UMMU UMMU UMMA
I DON'T KNOW, BUT THEIR PRESENCE IS HURTING SERSI!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO HER-- AND WHY DO YOU WANT TO HELP US? IF YOU RETURN US TO EARTH NOW, NOT ONLY WILL THE RADIATION KILL US, IT WILL ALSO POISON THE PLANET!
YES... ...WE KNOW.
TO BE CONCLUDED!

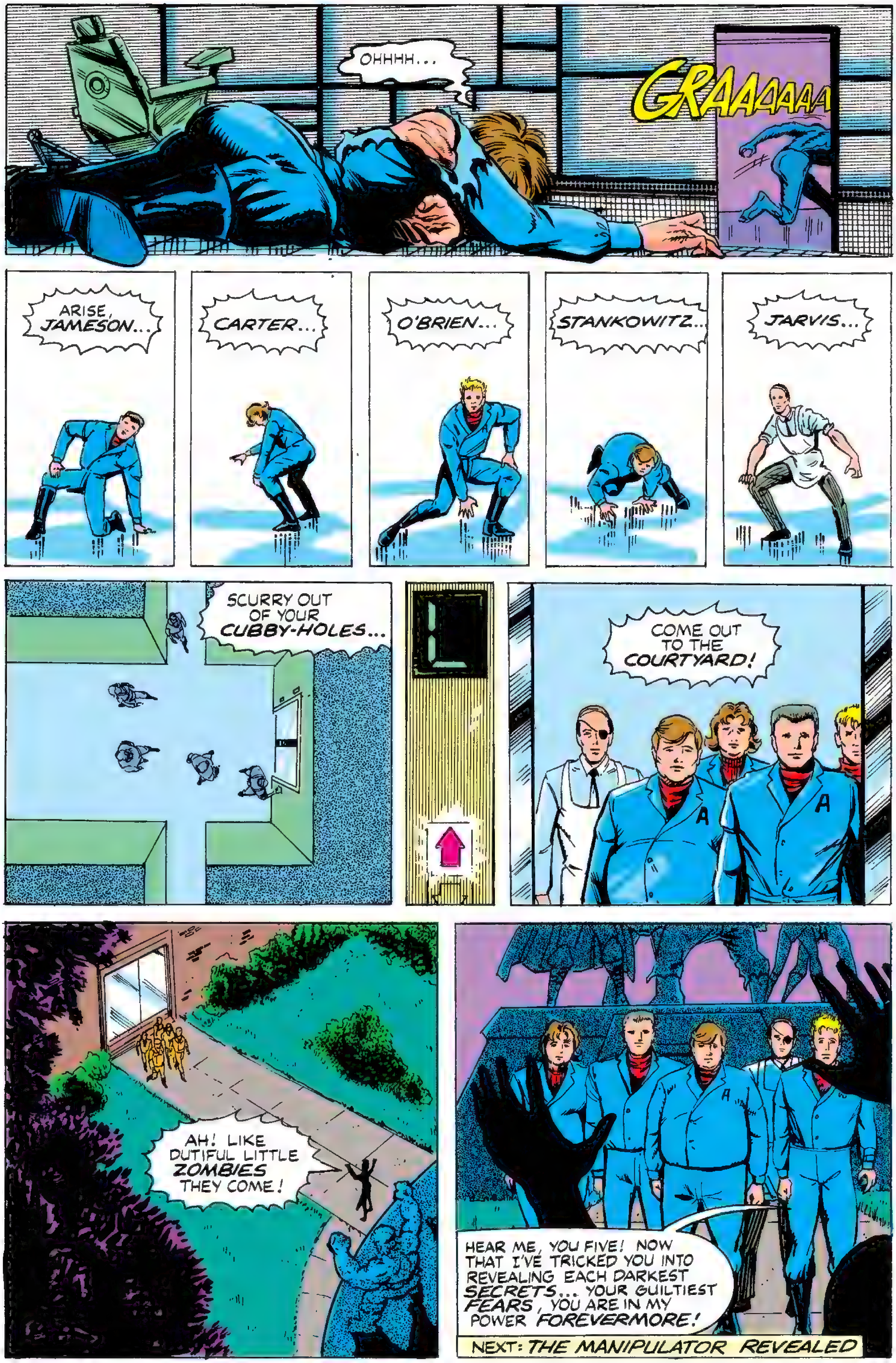

THE AVENGERS CREW
BETWEEN THE FIFTH AVENUE MANSION OF THE MIGHTY AVENGERS AND THE EAST RIVER EIGHT BLOCKS AWAY, IS A PRIVATE SUBWAY TUNNEL...
...WHERE THE AVENGERS' FIRST DESIGNATED PILOT, JOHN JAMESON, TAKES THE NEWLY-REFURBISHED SHUTTLE CAR TO THE LAUNCH DOCK ON A PRACTICE RUN...
THE MAN AND THE WOLF


WHOA-HO! THE ACCELERATION ON THIS BABY REMINDS ME OF MY FIRST SPACE FLIGHT BACK IN MY ASTRONAUT DAYS!
DON'T HAVE AS MUCH TO DO IN THIS RUNAWAY TRAIN AS ON THE OLD MERCURY CAPSULE-- PULL THE LEVER AND THIS SHUTTLE-JUMPER DOES ALL THE REST!
STORY: GRUENWALD
PENCILS: BRAD VANCATA / M. RITTER
INKS: MICKEY RITTER
LETTERS: ED LAZELLARI
COLORS: JOE ROSAS


FROM THE MANSION TO THE DOCK IN UNDER A *MINUTE*... PRETTY SLICK!
VVVM
STOPWATCH READY... NOW LET'S SEE HOW LONG IT TAKES TO SPRINT TO *CAP'S FLAGSHIP!*
GO!
THEY'D BETTER NEVER *WAX* THESE FLOORS OR SOMEONE'S LIABLE TO --
WHAT'S *THAT?*
MY GOD. NO.
THAT CAN'T BE WHAT I *THINK* IT IS... CAN IT?
THE *MOON-STONE* THAT ONCE TURNED ME INTO... A *MAN-WOLF...!*
IT *CAN'T* BE -- IT WAS *SHATTERED! DESTROYED!*
THEN WHAT THE HECK *IS* IT THAT LOOKS SO-- SO--
--SO...


GUK!
NO-- IT-- IT'S HAPPENING AGAIN!
JUMPED OUT OF MY HAND-- REATTACHED ITSELF TO MY THROAT--!
GOT TO GET IT OFF BEFORE -- BEFOAARRGH!
CHANGING--!
NO--OH, PLEASE, NO--!
GRAAR?
AROOOOO
RRRR... INSIDE... RRRR... WANT OUT... RRRR... GET AWAY...


ARROOOO
WHAT IN THE WORLD--?
RRRR... SCENT... RRRR... ...HUMAN...
RRAAH!
A -- WOLF-MAN!
NOOOO !!!
ELSEWHERE...
RRRR... OTHER SCENTS...
WHAT THE--?
AND...
RRRRRRR!
Huh? NO-- GET BACK!
STILL ELSEWHERE...
CARTER TO O'BRIEN! SECURITY BREACH COMM-CENTER! RED ALERT!


OHHHH...
GRAAAAAA
ARISE, JAMESON...
CARTER...
O'BRIEN...
STANKOWITZ...
JARVIS...
SCURRY OUT OF YOUR CUBBY-HOLES...
COME OUT TO THE COURTYARD!
AH! LIKE DUTIFUL LITTLE ZOMBIES THEY COME!
HEAR ME, YOU FIVE! NOW THAT I'VE TRICKED YOU INTO REVEALING EACH DARKEST SECRETS... YOUR GUILTIEST FEARS, YOU ARE IN MY POWER FOREVERMORE!
NEXT: THE MANIPULATOR REVEALED

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NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST!
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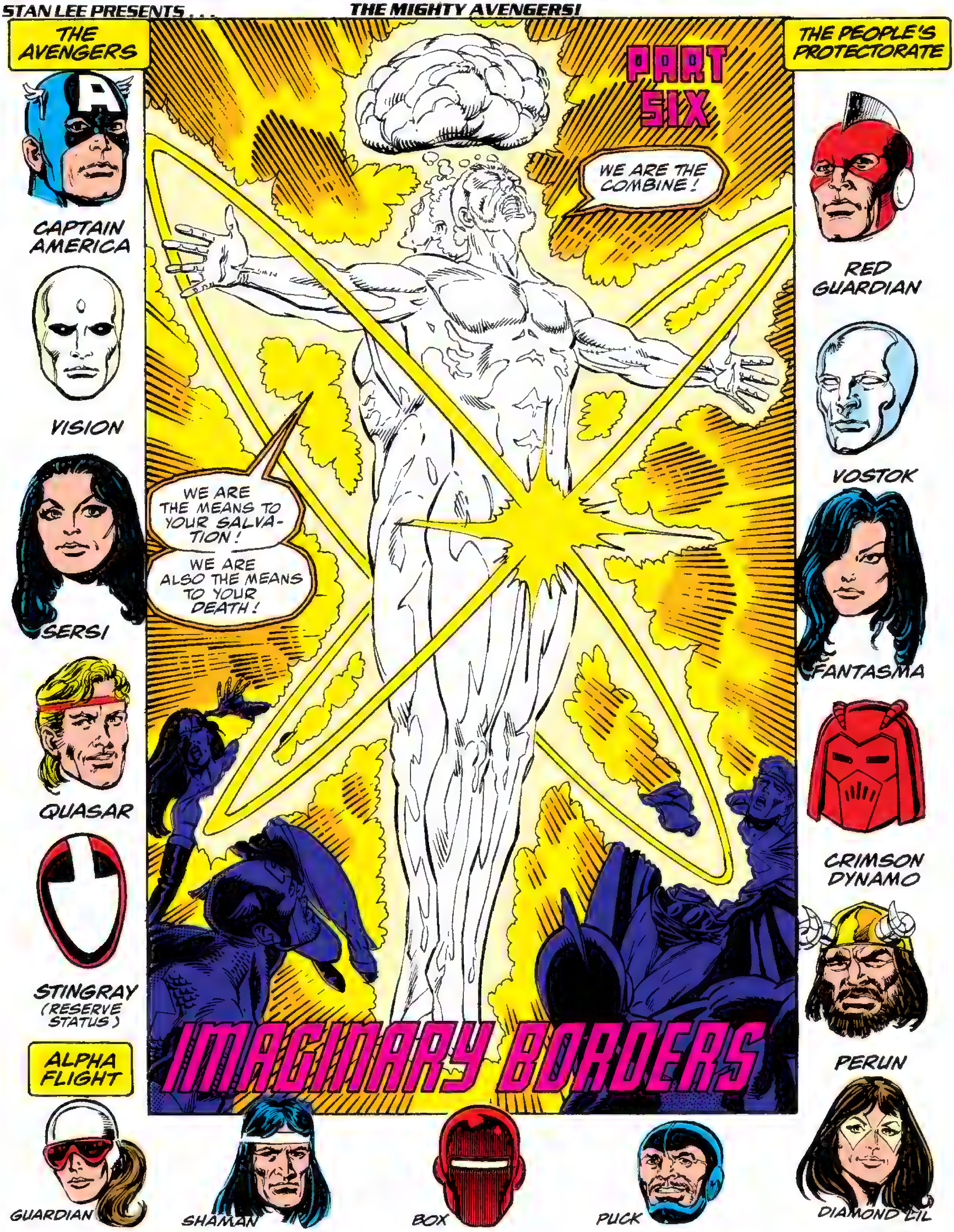
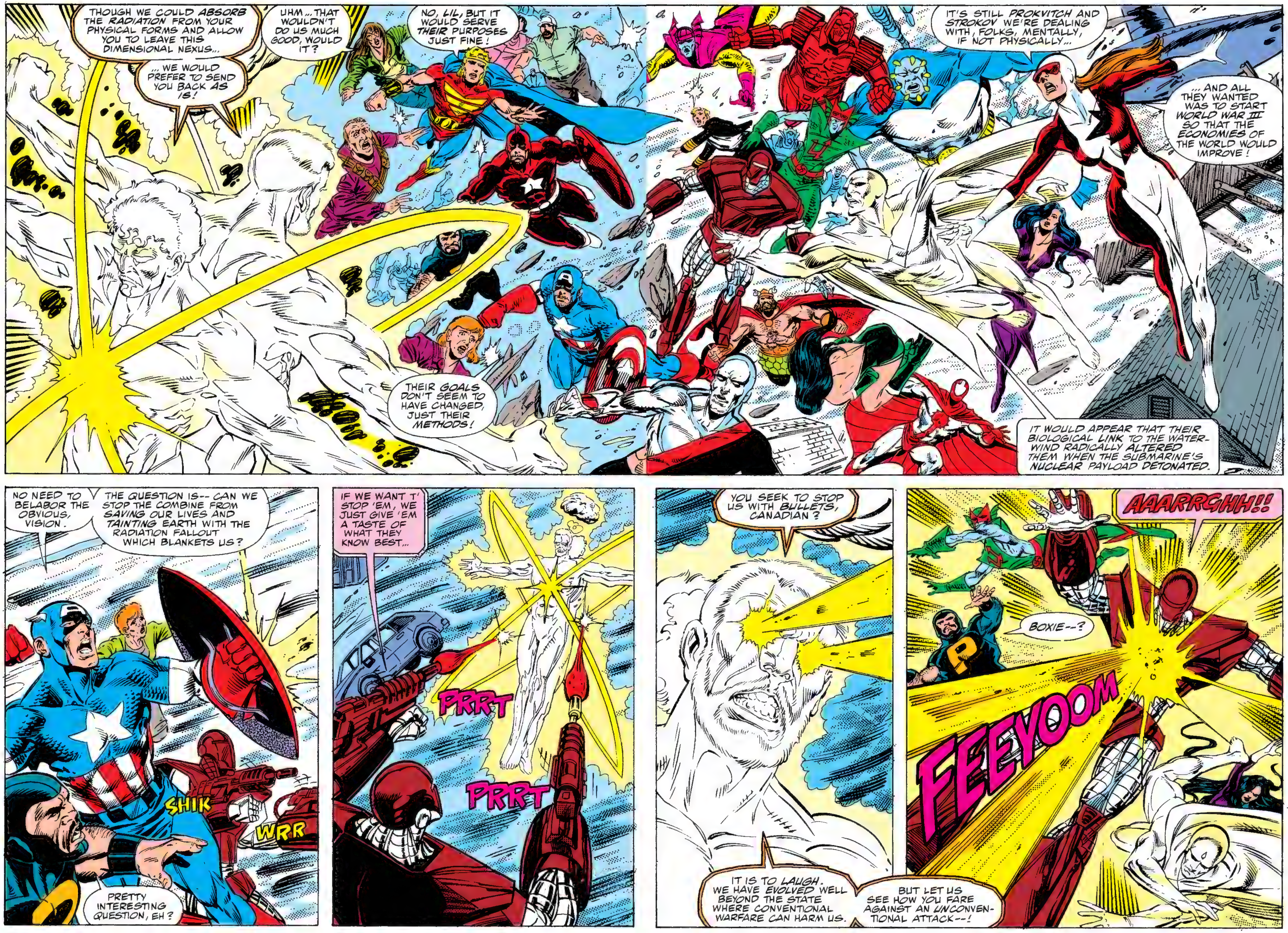
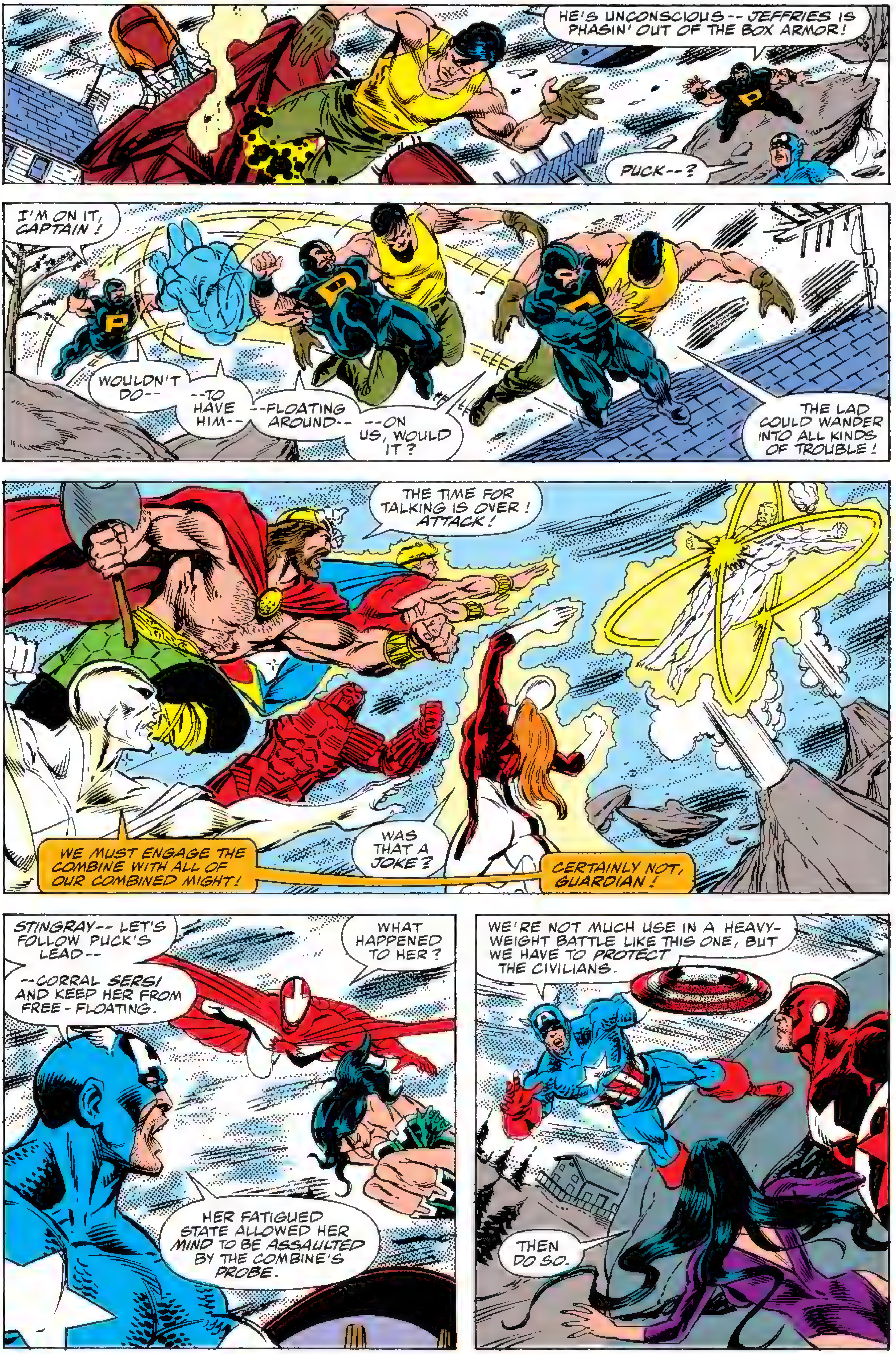
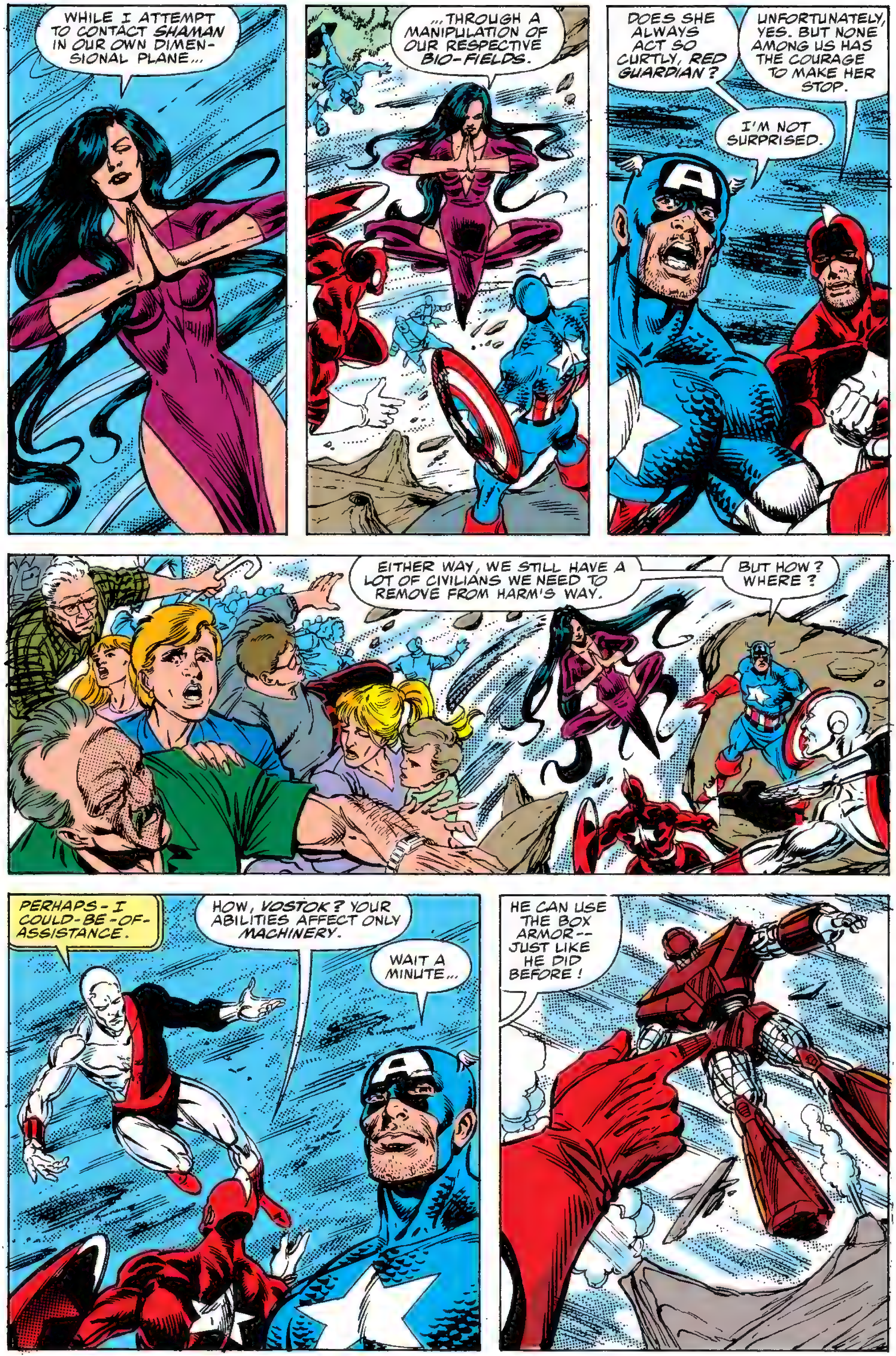
TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND!
STAN LEE PRESENTS . . . THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

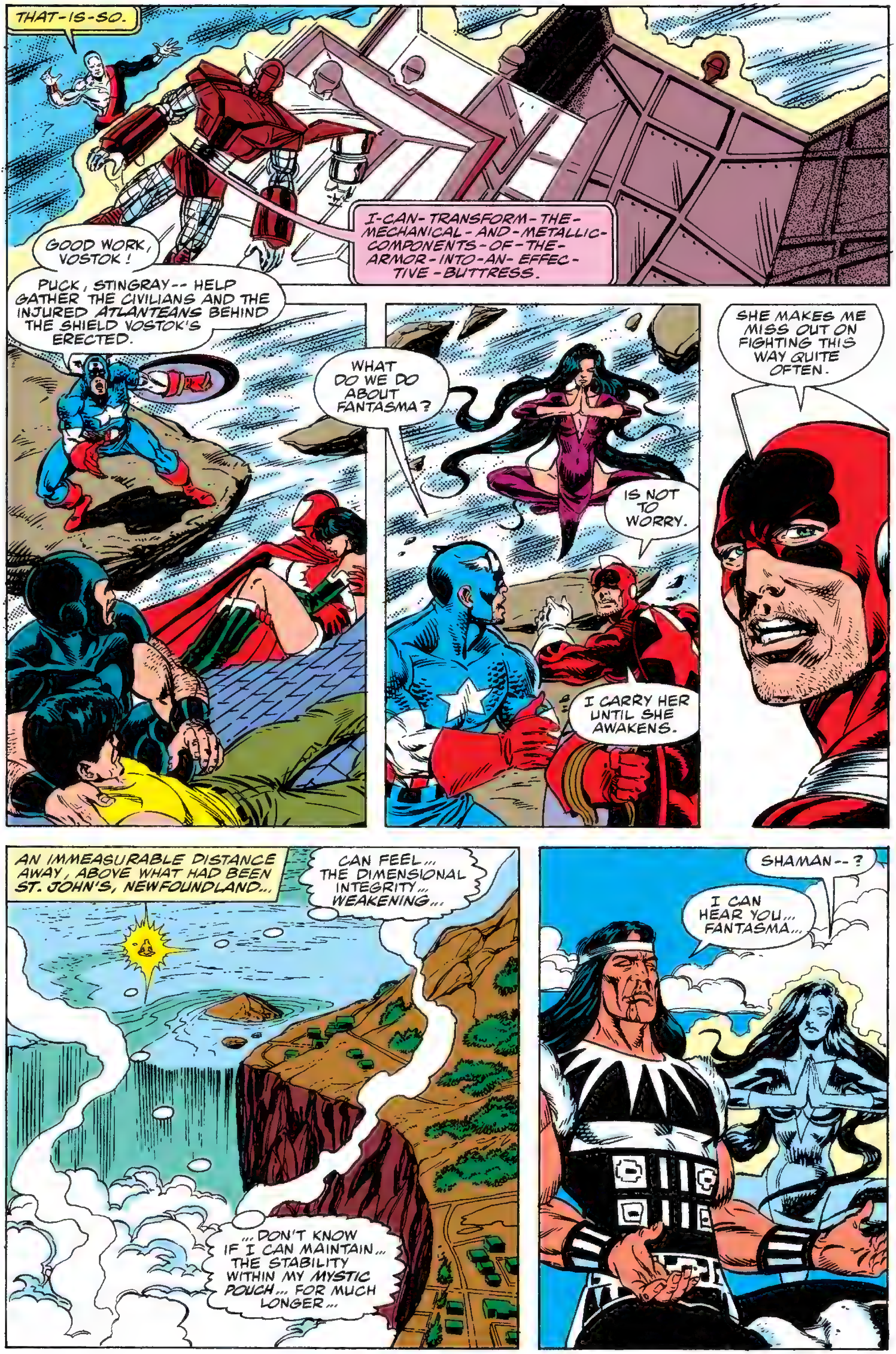

THE AVENGERS
CAPTAIN AMERICA
VISION
SERSI
QUASAR
STINGRAY (RESERVE STATUS)
PART SIX
WE ARE THE COMBINE!
WE ARE THE MEANS TO YOUR SALVATION!
WE ARE ALSO THE MEANS TO YOUR DEATH!
IMAGINARY BORDERS
THE PEOPLE'S PROTECTORATE
RED GUARDIAN
VOSTOK
FANTASMA
CRIMSON DYNAMO
PERUN
ALPHA FLIGHT
GUARDIAN
SHAMAN
BOX
PUCK
DIAMOND LIL

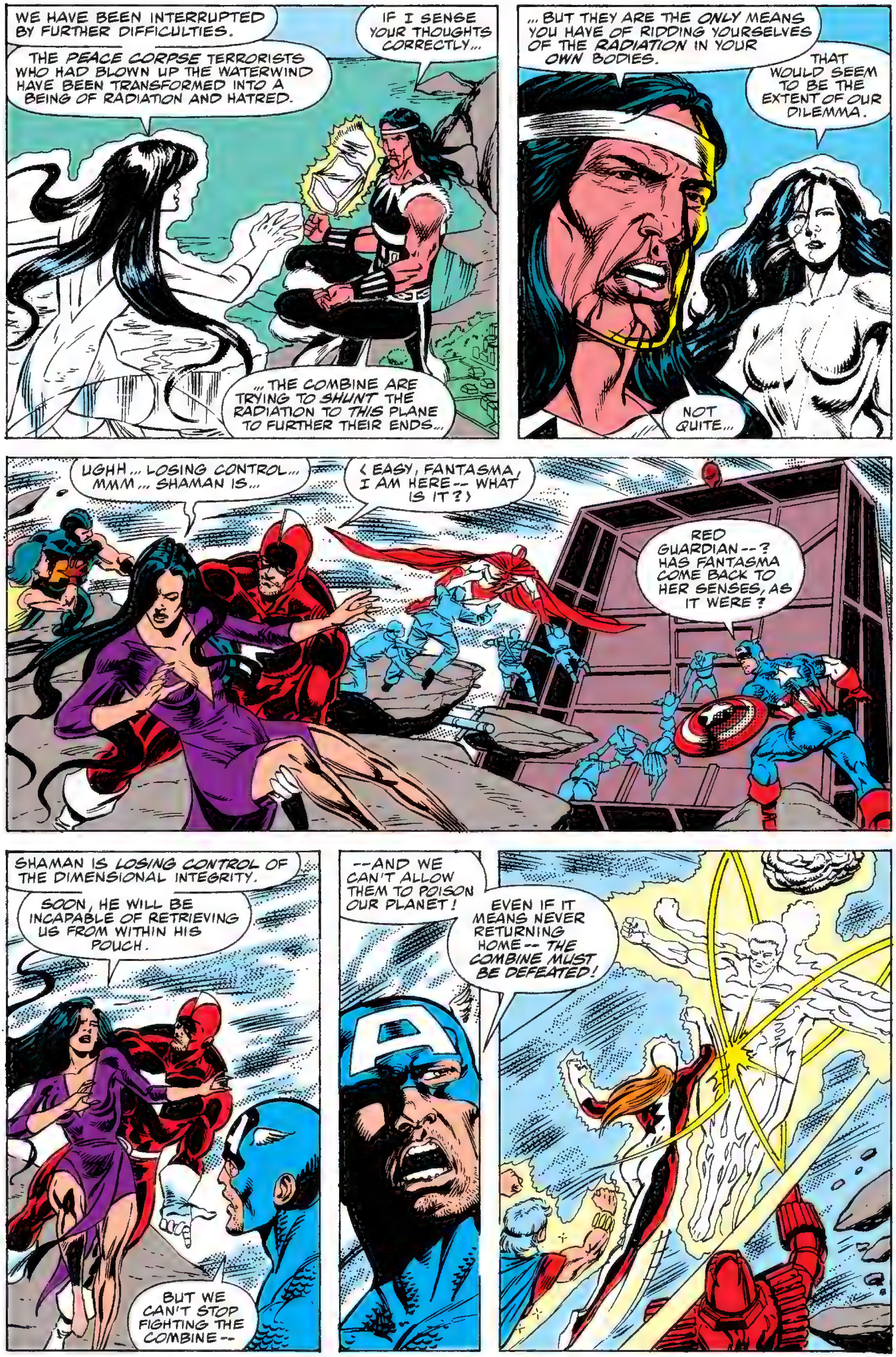
FABIAN NICIEZA WRITER * PAUL RYAN PENCILER * TOM PALMER INKER * BILL OAKLEY LETTERER * MAX SCHEELE COLORIST * HOWARD MACKIE EDITOR * TOM DeFALCO EDITOR IN CHIEF

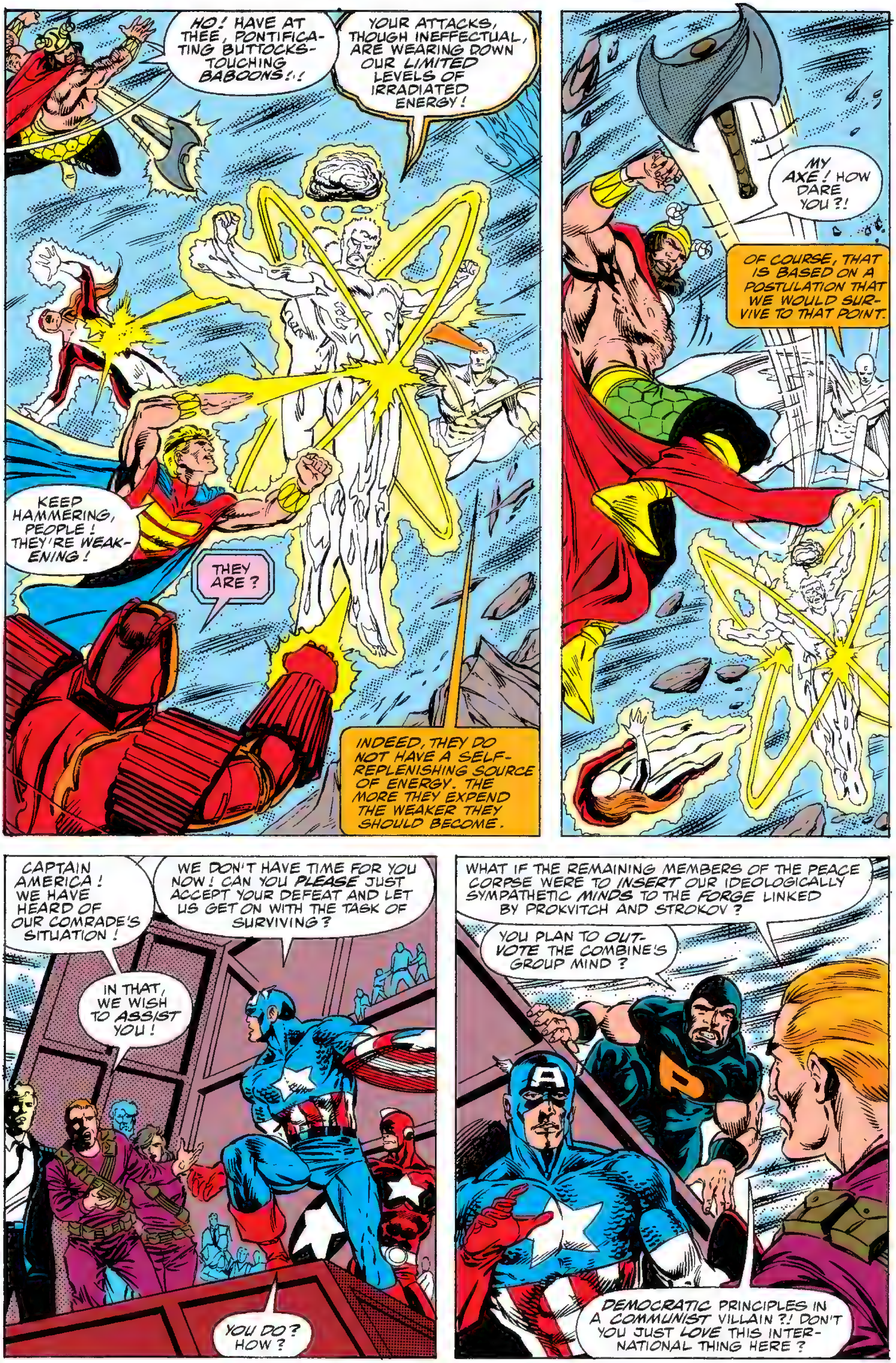

THOUGH WE COULD ABSORB THE RADIATION FROM YOUR PHYSICAL FORMS AND ALLOW YOU TO LEAVE THIS DIMENSIONAL NEXUS...
... WE WOULD PREFER TO SEND YOU BACK AS IS!
UHM... THAT WOULDN'T DO US MUCH GOOD, WOULD IT?
NO, LIL, BUT IT WOULD SERVE THEIR PURPOSES JUST FINE!
THEIR GOALS DON'T SEEM TO HAVE CHANGED, JUST THEIR METHODS!
IT'S STILL PROKVITCH AND STROKOV WE'RE DEALING WITH, FOLKS, MENTALLY, IF NOT PHYSICALLY...
... AND ALL THEY WANTED WAS TO START WORLD WAR III SO THAT THE ECONOMIES OF THE WORLD WOULD IMPROVE!
IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THEIR BIOLOGICAL LINK TO THE WATER-WIND RADICALLY ALTERED THEM WHEN THE SUBMARINE'S NUCLEAR PAYLOAD DETONATED.
NO NEED TO BELABOR THE OBVIOUS, VISION.
THE QUESTION IS-- CAN WE STOP THE COMBINE FROM SAVING OUR LIVES AND TAINTING EARTH WITH THE RADIATION FALLOUT WHICH BLANKETS US?
SHIK
WRR
PRETTY INTERESTING QUESTION, EH?
IF WE WANT T' STOP 'EM, WE JUST GIVE 'EM A TASTE OF WHAT THEY KNOW BEST...
PRRT
PRRT
YOU SEEK TO STOP US WITH BULLETS, CANADIAN?
IT IS TO LAUGH. WE HAVE EVOLVED WELL BEYOND THE STATE WHERE CONVENTIONAL WARFARE CAN HARM US.
BUT LET US SEE HOW YOU FARE AGAINST AN UNCONVENTIONAL ATTACK--!
AAARRGHH!!
BOXIE--?
FEEYOOM

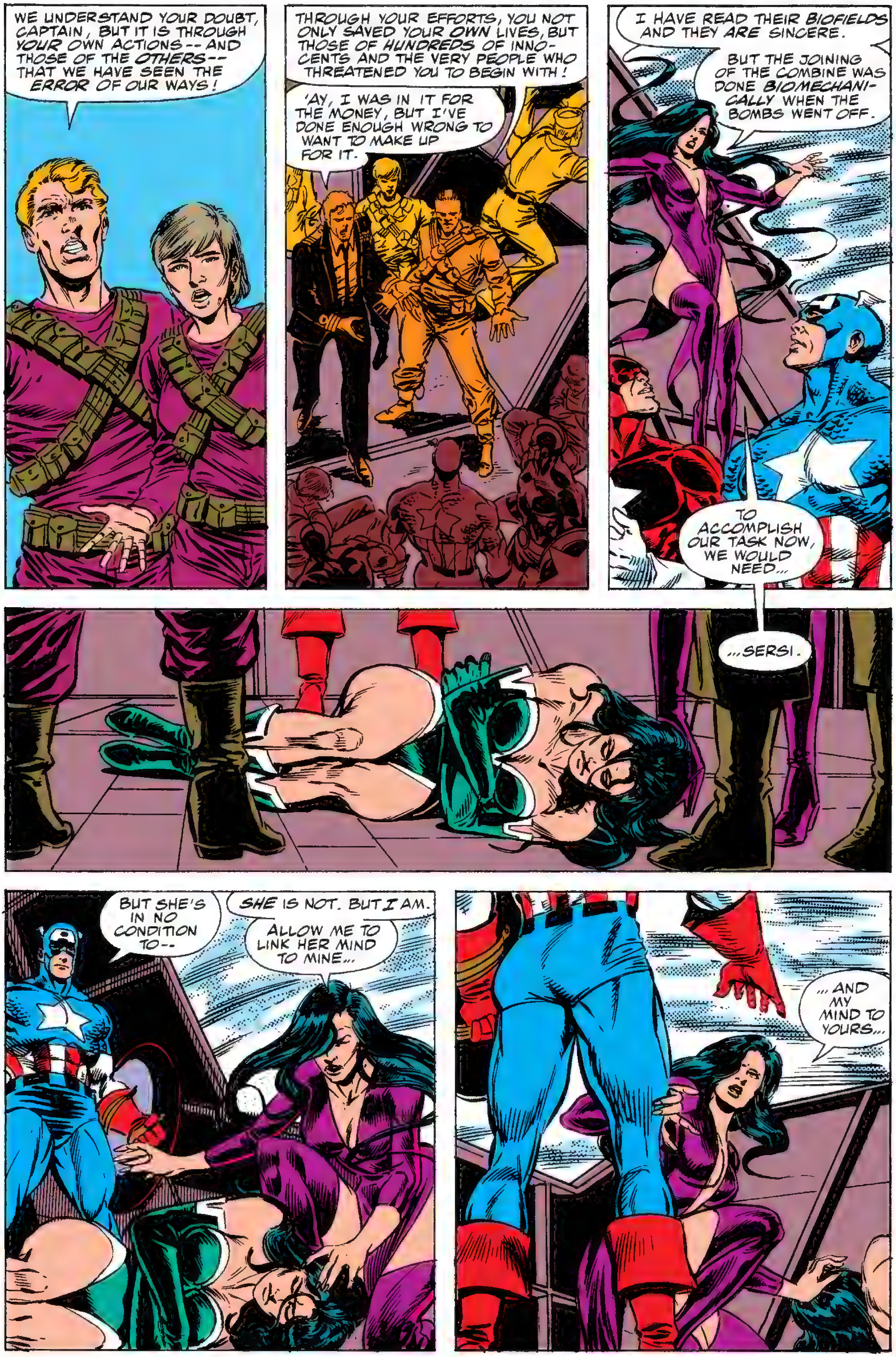

HE'S UNCONSCIOUS-- JEFFRIES IS PHASIN' OUT OF THE BOX ARMOR!
PUCK--?
I'M ON IT, CAPTAIN!
WOULDN'T DO--
--TO HAVE HIM--
--FLOATING AROUND--
--ON US, WOULD IT?
THE LAD COULD WANDER INTO ALL KINDS OF TROUBLE!
THE TIME FOR TALKING IS OVER! ATTACK!
WE MUST ENGAGE THE COMBINE WITH ALL OF OUR COMBINED MIGHT!
WAS THAT A JOKE?
CERTAINLY NOT, GUARDIAN!
STINGRAY-- LET'S FOLLOW PUCK'S LEAD--
--CORRAL SERSI AND KEEP HER FROM FREE-FLOATING.
WHAT HAPPENED TO HER?
HER FATIGUED STATE ALLOWED HER MIND TO BE ASSAULTED BY THE COMBINE'S PROBE.
WE'RE NOT MUCH USE IN A HEAVY-WEIGHT BATTLE LIKE THIS ONE, BUT WE HAVE TO PROTECT THE CIVILIANS.
THEN DO SO.

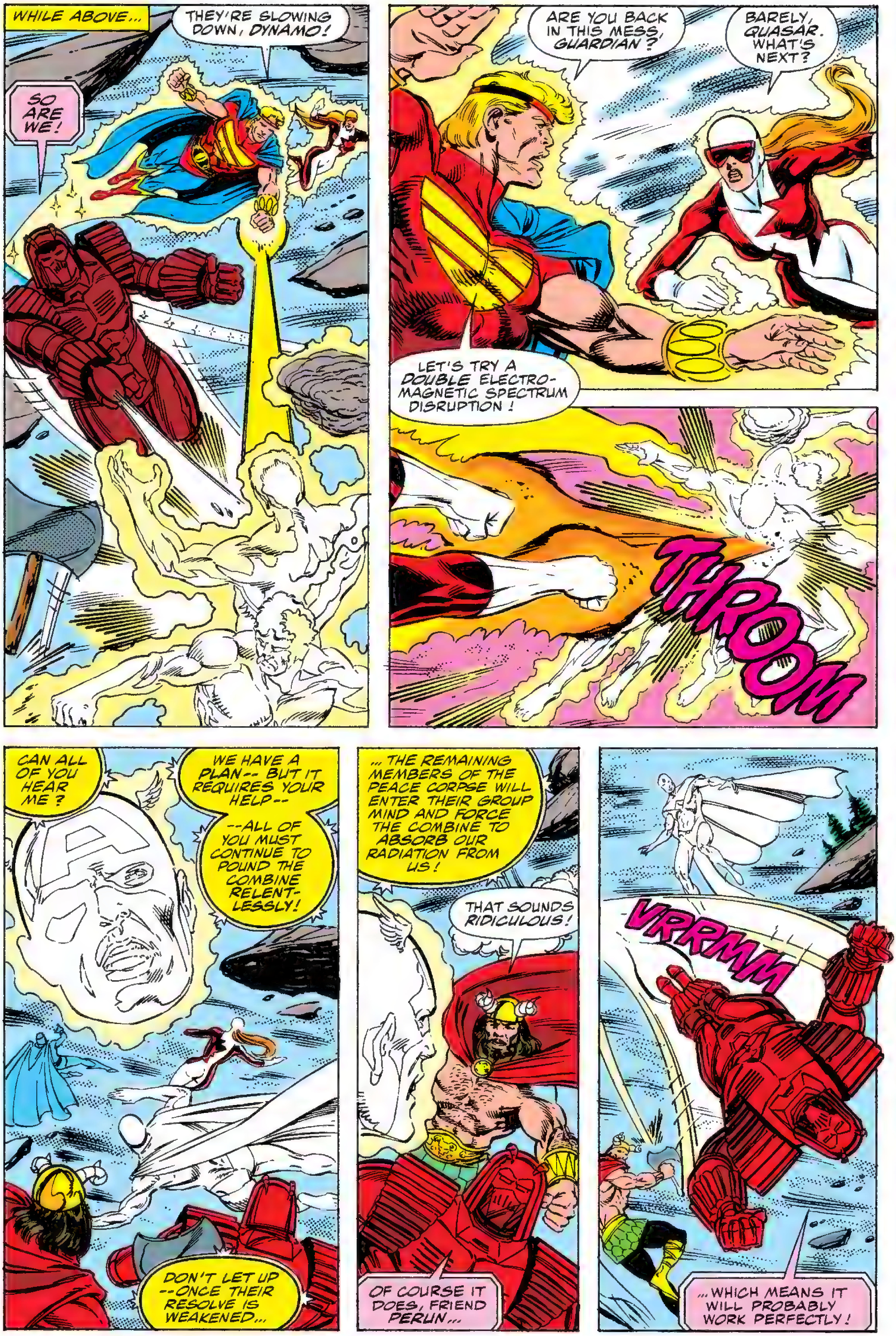

WHILE I ATTEMPT TO CONTACT SHAMAN IN OUR OWN DIMENSIONAL PLANE...
...THROUGH A MANIPULATION OF OUR RESPECTIVE BIO-FIELDS.
DOES SHE ALWAYS ACT SO CURTLY, RED GUARDIAN?
UNFORTUNATELY, YES. BUT NONE AMONG US HAS THE COURAGE TO MAKE HER STOP.
I'M NOT SURPRISED.
EITHER WAY, WE STILL HAVE A LOT OF CIVILIANS WE NEED TO REMOVE FROM HARM'S WAY.
BUT HOW? WHERE?
PERHAPS - I COULD - BE - OF - ASSISTANCE.
HOW, VOSTOK? YOUR ABILITIES AFFECT ONLY MACHINERY.
WAIT A MINUTE...
HE CAN USE THE BOX ARMOR -- JUST LIKE HE DID BEFORE!

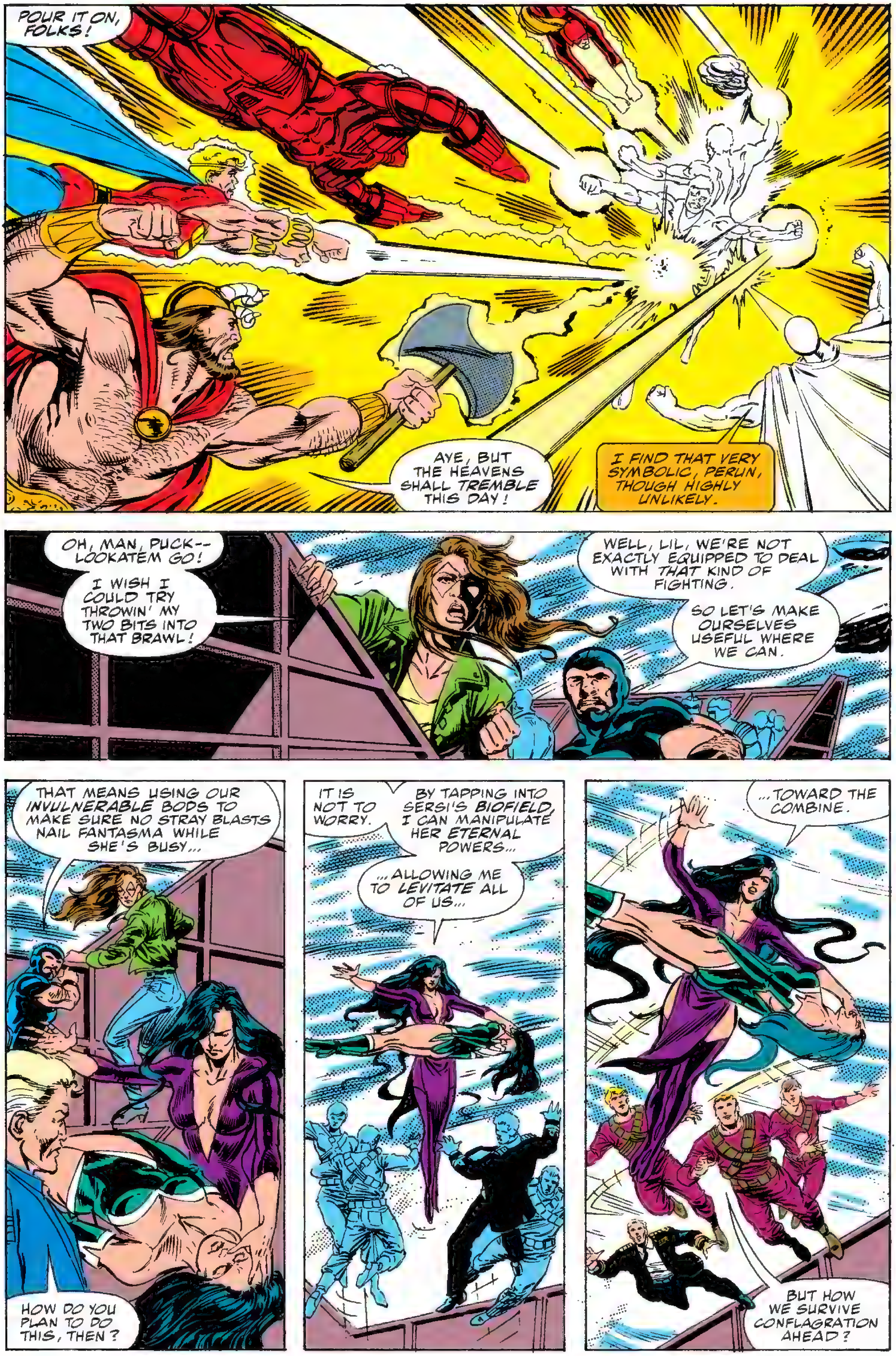

THAT-IS-SO.
I-CAN-TRANSFORM-THE-MECHANICAL-AND-METALLIC-COMPONENTS-OF-THE-ARMOR-INTO-AN-EFFECTIVE-BUTTRESS.
GOOD WORK, VOSTOK!
PUCK, STINGRAY-- HELP GATHER THE CIVILIANS AND THE INJURED ATLANTEANS BEHIND THE SHIELD VOSTOK'S ERECTED.
WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT FANTASMA?
IS NOT TO WORRY.
I CARRY HER UNTIL SHE AWAKENS.
SHE MAKES ME MISS OUT ON FIGHTING THIS WAY QUITE OFTEN.
AN IMMEASURABLE DISTANCE AWAY, ABOVE WHAT HAD BEEN ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND...
CAN FEEL... THE DIMENSIONAL INTEGRITY... WEAKENING...
...DON'T KNOW IF I CAN MAINTAIN... THE STABILITY WITHIN MY MYSTIC POUCH... FOR MUCH LONGER...
SHAMAN--?
I CAN HEAR YOU... FANTASMA...

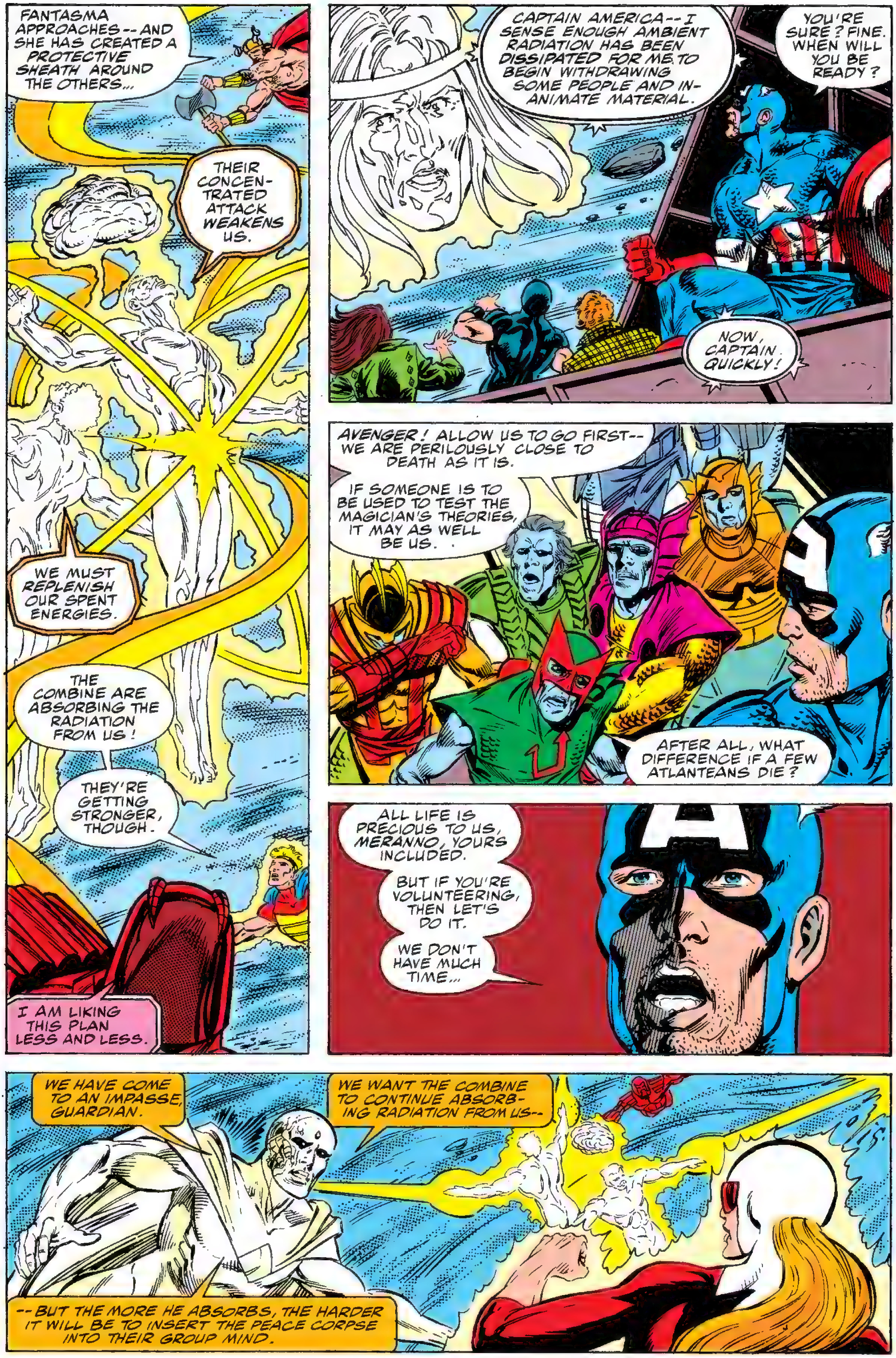

WE HAVE BEEN INTERRUPTED BY FURTHER DIFFICULTIES.
THE *PEACE CORPSE* TERRORISTS WHO HAD BLOWN UP THE WATERWIND HAVE BEEN TRANSFORMED INTO A BEING OF RADIATION AND HATRED.
IF I SENSE YOUR THOUGHTS CORRECTLY...
...THE COMBINE ARE TRYING TO *SHUNT* THE RADIATION TO *THIS* PLANE TO FURTHER THEIR ENDS...
...BUT THEY ARE THE *ONLY* MEANS YOU HAVE OF RIDDING YOURSELVES OF THE *RADIATION* IN YOUR *OWN* BODIES.
THAT WOULD SEEM TO BE THE EXTENT OF OUR DILEMMA.
NOT QUITE...
UGHH... LOSING CONTROL... MMM... SHAMAN IS...
‹ EASY, FANTASMA, I AM HERE-- WHAT IS IT? ›
RED GUARDIAN--? HAS FANTASMA COME BACK TO HER SENSES, AS IT WERE?
SHAMAN IS *LOSING CONTROL* OF THE DIMENSIONAL INTEGRITY.
SOON, HE WILL BE INCAPABLE OF RETRIEVING US FROM WITHIN HIS POUCH.
BUT WE CAN'T STOP FIGHTING THE COMBINE--
--AND WE CAN'T ALLOW THEM TO POISON OUR PLANET!
EVEN IF IT MEANS NEVER RETURNING HOME-- *THE COMBINE MUST BE DEFEATED!*

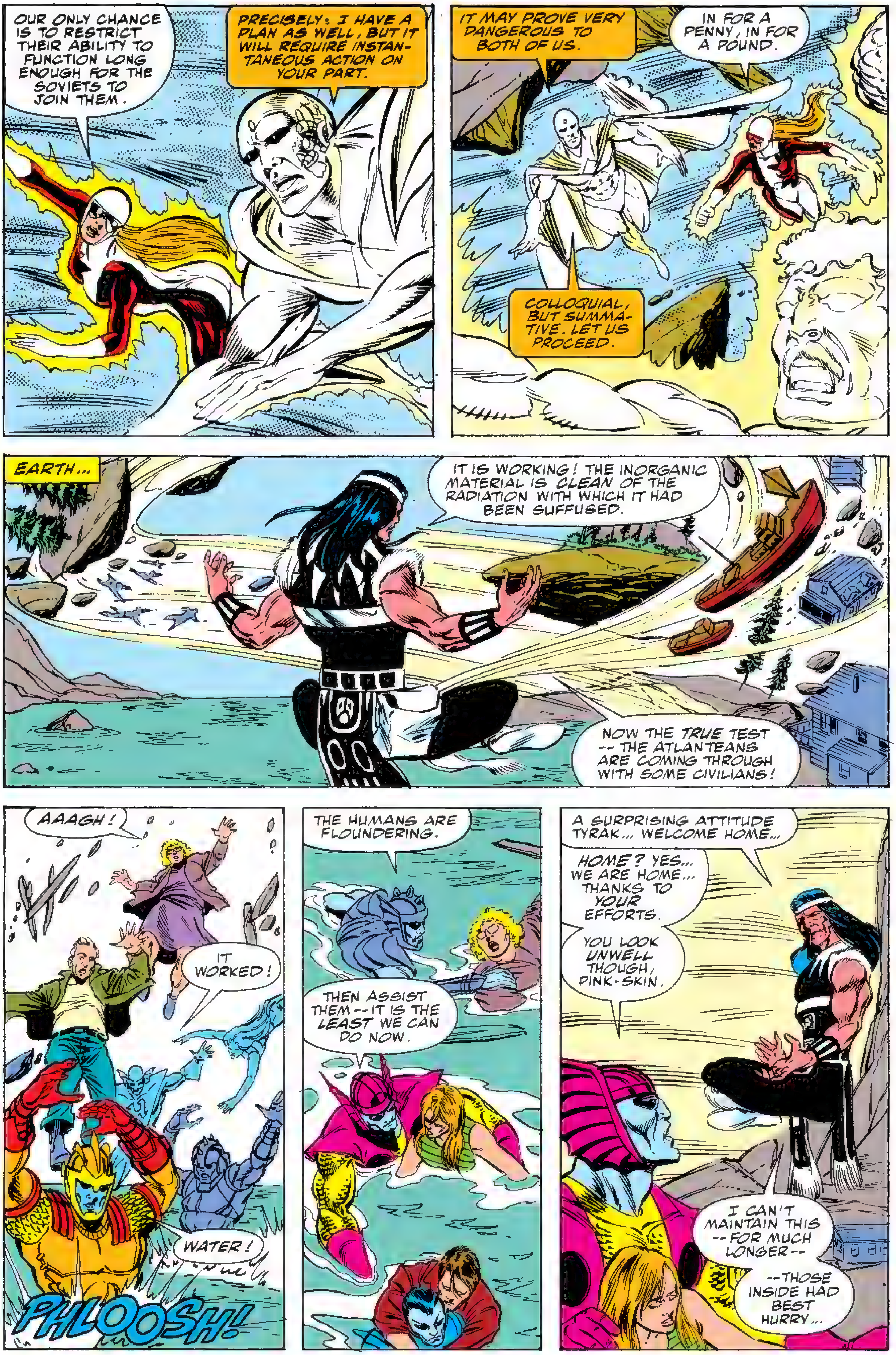

HO! HAVE AT THEE, PONTIFICATING BUTTOCKS-TOUCHING BABOONS!!
YOUR ATTACKS, THOUGH INEFFECTUAL, ARE WEARING DOWN OUR LIMITED LEVELS OF IRRADIATED ENERGY!
KEEP HAMMERING, PEOPLE! THEY'RE WEAKENING!
THEY ARE?
INDEED, THEY DO NOT HAVE A SELF-REPLENISHING SOURCE OF ENERGY. THE MORE THEY EXPEND THE WEAKER THEY SHOULD BECOME.
MY AXE! HOW DARE YOU?!
OF COURSE, THAT IS BASED ON A POSTULATION THAT WE WOULD SURVIVE TO THAT POINT.
CAPTAIN AMERICA! WE HAVE HEARD OF OUR COMRADE'S SITUATION!
WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR YOU NOW! CAN YOU PLEASE JUST ACCEPT YOUR DEFEAT AND LET US GET ON WITH THE TASK OF SURVIVING?
IN THAT, WE WISH TO ASSIST YOU!
YOU DO? HOW?
WHAT IF THE REMAINING MEMBERS OF THE PEACE CORPSE WERE TO INSERT OUR IDEOLOGICALLY SYMPATHETIC MINDS TO THE FORGE LINKED BY PROKVITCH AND STROKOV?
YOU PLAN TO OUT-VOTE THE COMBINE'S GROUP MIND?
DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES IN A COMMUNIST VILLAIN?! DON'T YOU JUST LOVE THIS INTERNATIONAL THING HERE?

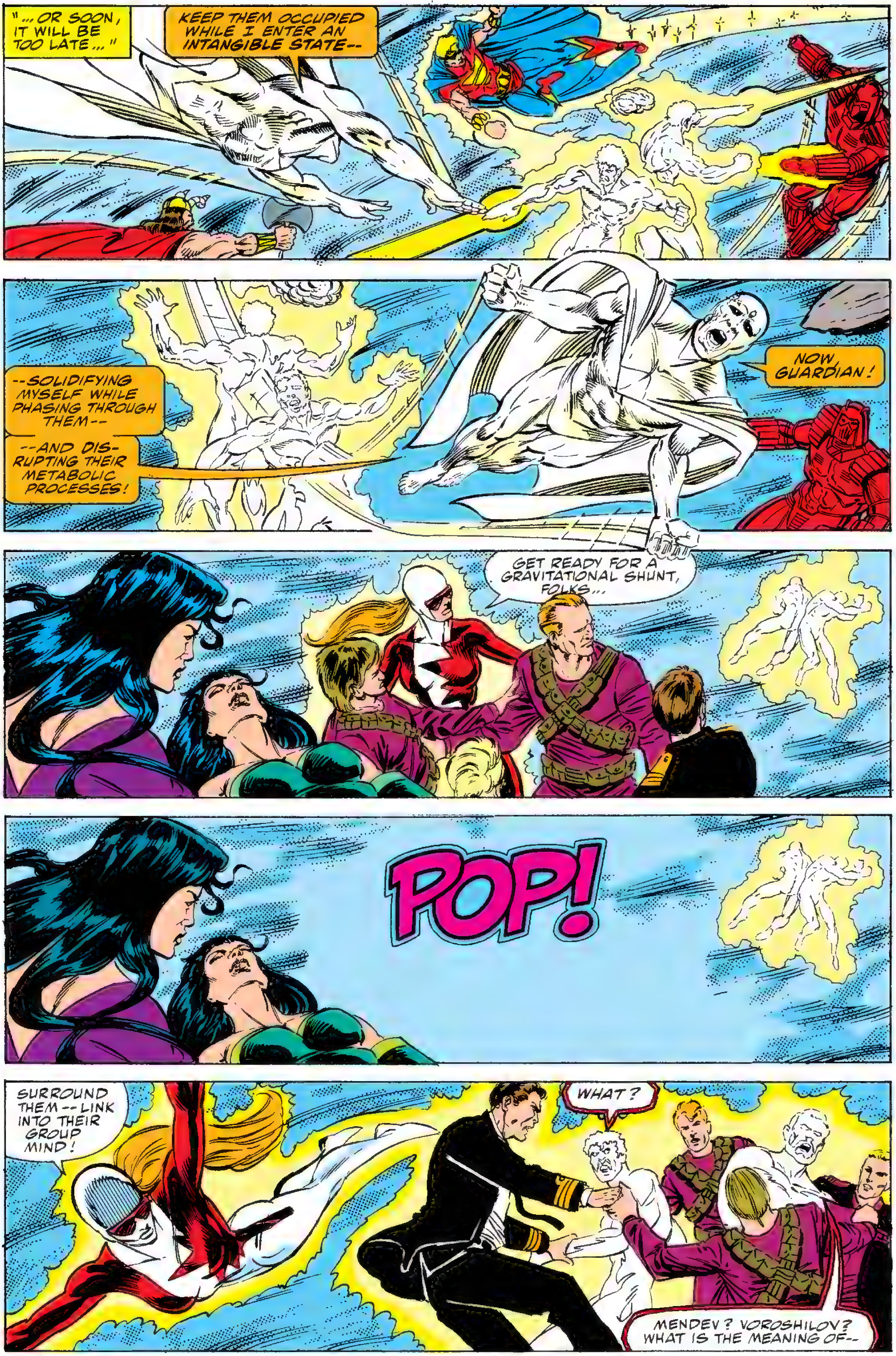

WE UNDERSTAND YOUR DOUBT, CAPTAIN, BUT IT IS THROUGH *YOUR* OWN ACTIONS -- AND THOSE OF THE *OTHERS* -- THAT WE HAVE SEEN THE *ERROR* OF OUR WAYS!
THROUGH YOUR EFFORTS, YOU NOT ONLY SAVED YOUR *OWN* LIVES, BUT THOSE OF *HUNDREDS* OF INNOCENTS AND THE VERY PEOPLE WHO THREATENED YOU TO BEGIN WITH!
'AY, I WAS IN IT FOR THE MONEY, BUT I'VE DONE ENOUGH WRONG TO WANT TO MAKE UP FOR IT.
I HAVE READ THEIR *BIOFIELDS* AND THEY *ARE* SINCERE.
BUT THE JOINING OF THE COMBINE WAS DONE *BIOMECHANICALLY* WHEN THE BOMBS WENT OFF.
TO ACCOMPLISH OUR TASK NOW, WE WOULD NEED...
...SERSI.
BUT SHE'S IN NO CONDITION TO--
SHE IS NOT. BUT *I* AM.
ALLOW ME TO LINK HER MIND TO MINE...
...AND MY MIND TO YOURS...

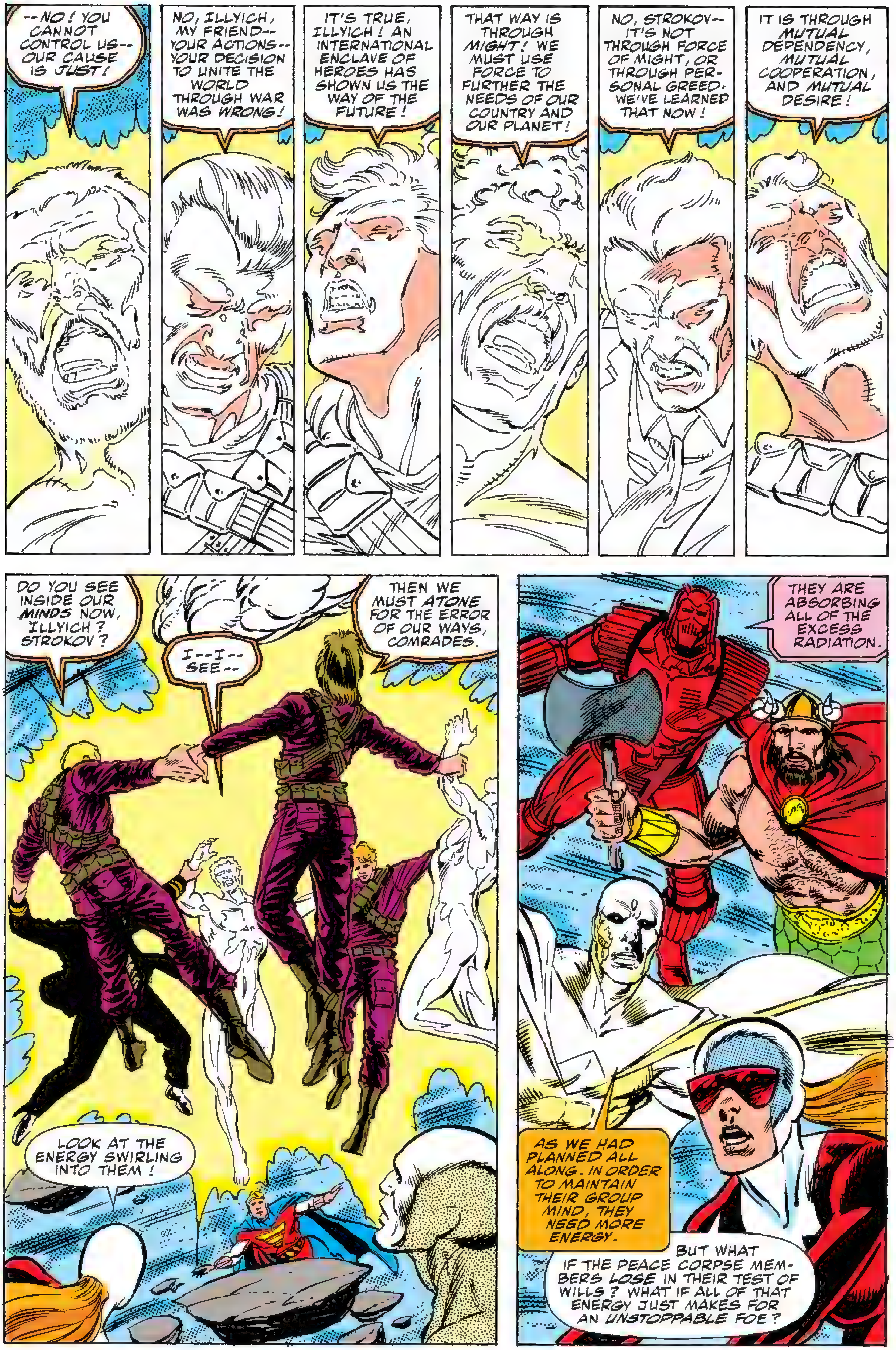

WHILE ABOVE...
THEY'RE SLOWING DOWN, DYNAMO!
SO ARE WE!
ARE YOU BACK IN THIS MESS, GUARDIAN?
BARELY, QUASAR. WHAT'S NEXT?
LET'S TRY A DOUBLE ELECTRO-MAGNETIC SPECTRUM DISRUPTION!
THROOM
CAN ALL OF YOU HEAR ME?
WE HAVE A PLAN-- BUT IT REQUIRES YOUR HELP--
--ALL OF YOU MUST CONTINUE TO POUND THE COMBINE RELENTLESSLY!
DON'T LET UP --ONCE THEIR RESOLVE IS WEAKENED...
...THE REMAINING MEMBERS OF THE PEACE CORPSE WILL ENTER THEIR GROUP MIND AND FORCE THE COMBINE TO ABSORB OUR RADIATION FROM US!
THAT SOUNDS RIDICULOUS!
OF COURSE IT DOES, FRIEND PERUN...
VRRMMM
...WHICH MEANS IT WILL PROBABLY WORK PERFECTLY!

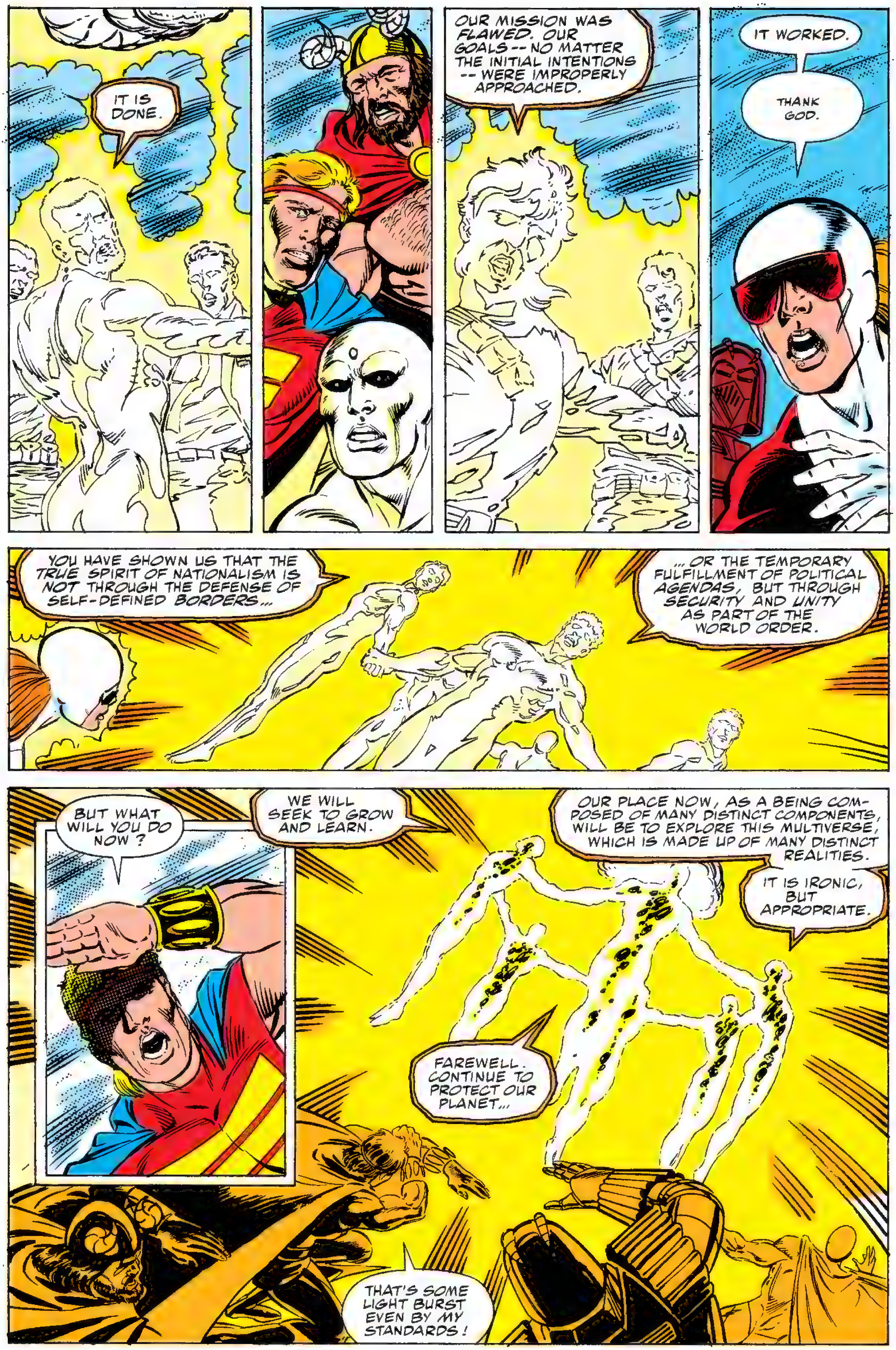

POUR IT ON, FOLKS!
AYE, BUT THE HEAVENS SHALL *TREMBLE* THIS DAY!
I FIND THAT VERY SYMBOLIC, PERUN, THOUGH HIGHLY UNLIKELY.
OH, MAN, PUCK-- LOOKATEM GO!
I WISH I COULD TRY THROWIN' MY TWO BITS INTO THAT BRAWL!
WELL, LIL, WE'RE NOT EXACTLY EQUIPPED TO DEAL WITH *THAT* KIND OF FIGHTING.
SO LET'S MAKE OURSELVES USEFUL WHERE WE CAN.
THAT MEANS USING OUR *INVULNERABLE BODS* TO MAKE SURE NO STRAY BLASTS NAIL FANTASMA WHILE SHE'S BUSY...
HOW DO YOU PLAN TO DO THIS, THEN?
IT IS NOT TO WORRY.
BY TAPPING INTO SERSI'S *BIOFIELD*, I CAN MANIPULATE HER *ETERNAL* POWERS...
...ALLOWING ME TO *LEVITATE* ALL OF US...
...TOWARD THE COMBINE.
BUT HOW WE SURVIVE CONFLAGRATION AHEAD?

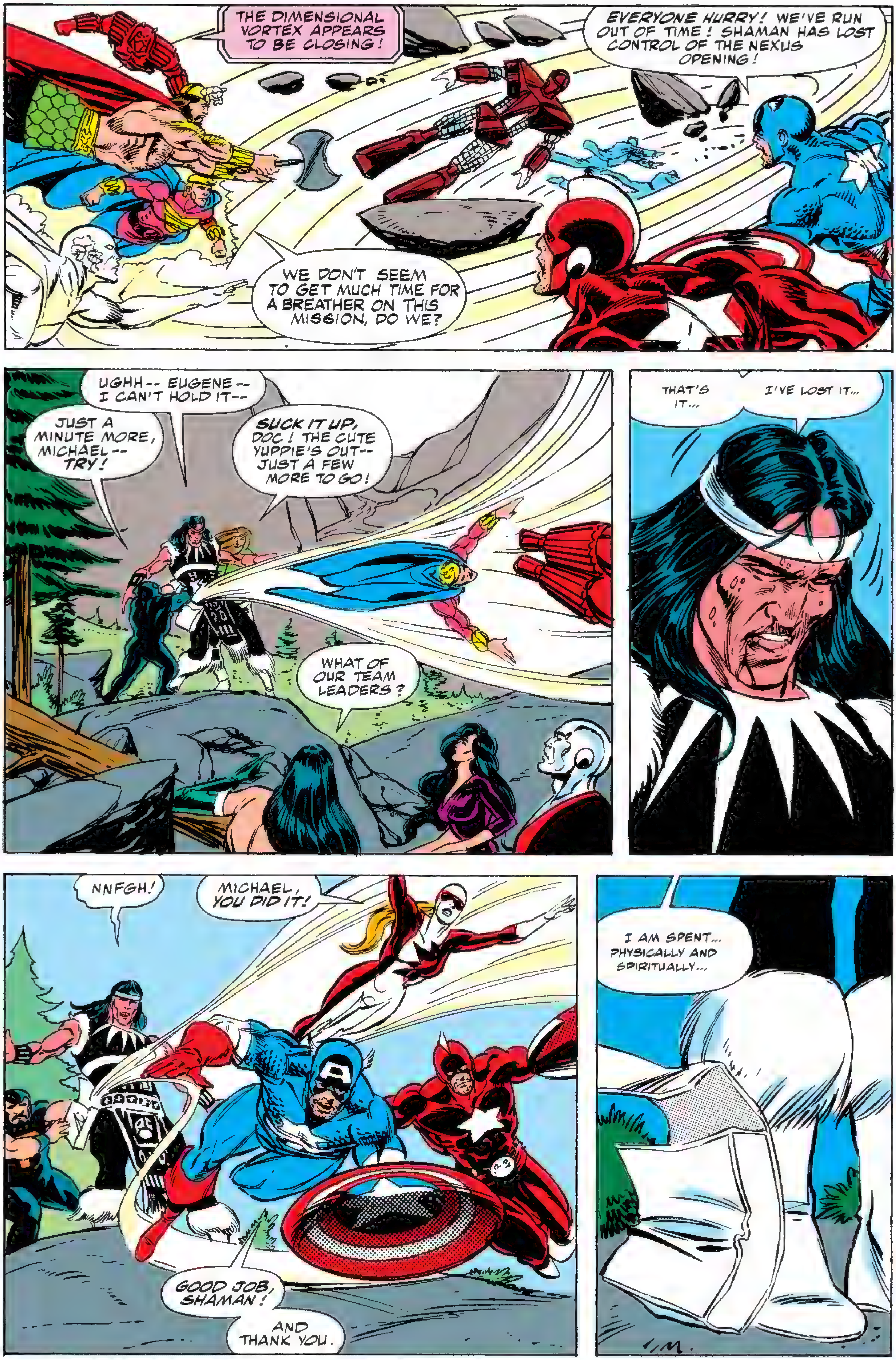

FANTASMA APPROACHES--AND SHE HAS CREATED A PROTECTIVE SHEATH AROUND THE OTHERS...
THEIR CONCENTRATED ATTACK WEAKENS US.
WE MUST REPLENISH OUR SPENT ENERGIES.
THE COMBINE ARE ABSORBING THE RADIATION FROM US!
THEY'RE GETTING STRONGER, THOUGH.
I AM LIKING THIS PLAN LESS AND LESS.
CAPTAIN AMERICA--I SENSE ENOUGH AMBIENT RADIATION HAS BEEN DISSIPATED FOR ME TO BEGIN WITHDRAWING SOME PEOPLE AND INANIMATE MATERIAL.
YOU'RE SURE? FINE. WHEN WILL YOU BE READY?
NOW, CAPTAIN. QUICKLY!
AVENGER! ALLOW US TO GO FIRST-- WE ARE PERILOUSLY CLOSE TO DEATH AS IT IS.
IF SOMEONE IS TO BE USED TO TEST THE MAGICIAN'S THEORIES, IT MAY AS WELL BE US.
AFTER ALL, WHAT DIFFERENCE IF A FEW ATLANTEANS DIE?
ALL LIFE IS PRECIOUS TO US, MERANNO, YOURS INCLUDED.
BUT IF YOU'RE VOLUNTEERING, THEN LET'S DO IT.
WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME...
WE HAVE COME TO AN IMPASSE, GUARDIAN.
WE WANT THE COMBINE TO CONTINUE ABSORBING RADIATION FROM US--
--BUT THE MORE HE ABSORBS, THE HARDER IT WILL BE TO INSERT THE PEACE CORPSE INTO THEIR GROUP MIND.

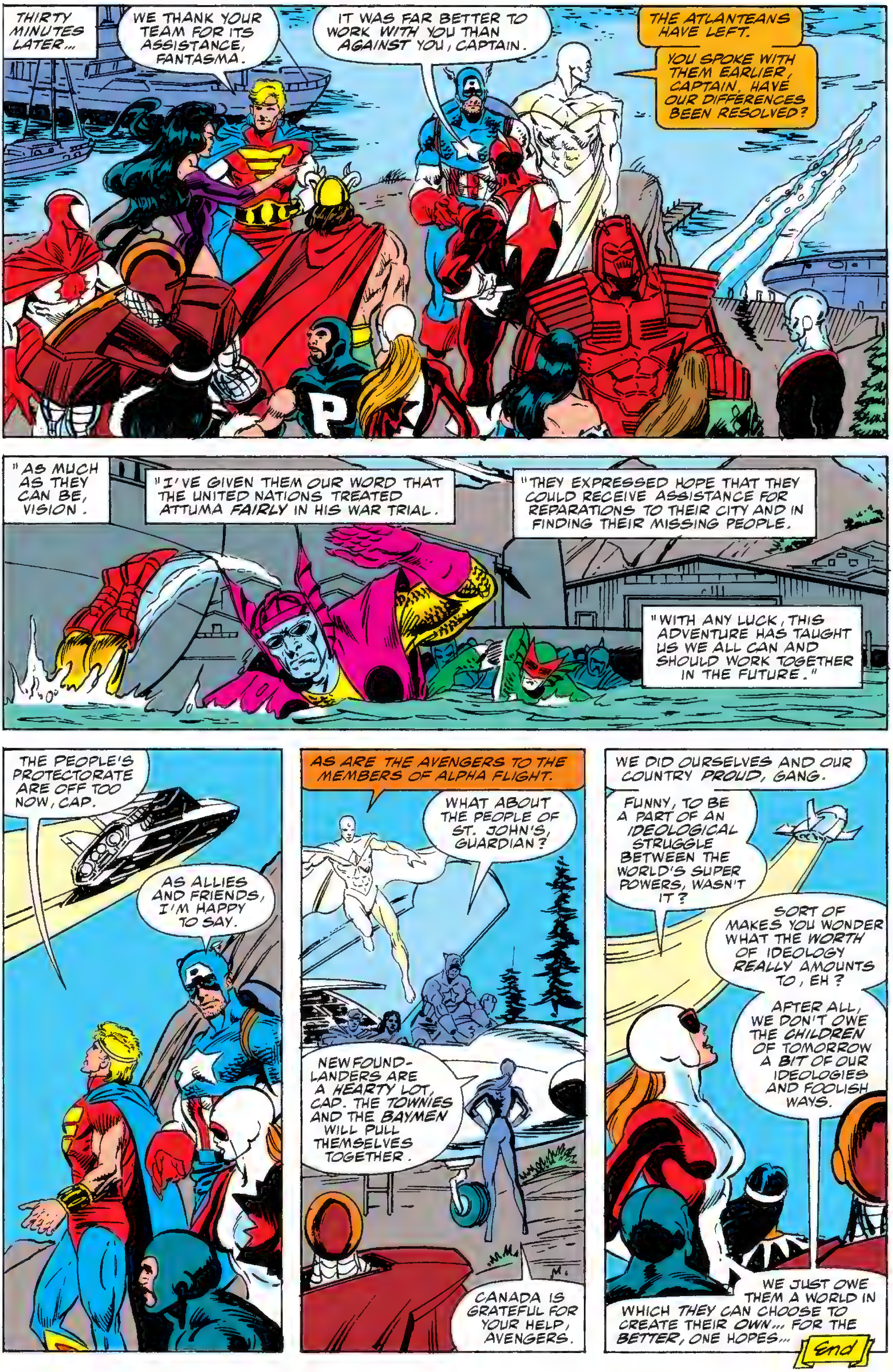

OUR ONLY CHANCE IS TO RESTRICT THEIR ABILITY TO FUNCTION LONG ENOUGH FOR THE SOVIETS TO JOIN THEM.
PRECISELY. I HAVE A PLAN AS WELL, BUT IT WILL REQUIRE INSTANTANEOUS ACTION ON YOUR PART.
IT MAY PROVE VERY DANGEROUS TO BOTH OF US.
IN FOR A PENNY, IN FOR A POUND.
COLLOQUIAL, BUT SUMMATIVE. LET US PROCEED.
EARTH...
IT IS WORKING! THE INORGANIC MATERIAL IS *CLEAN* OF THE RADIATION WITH WHICH IT HAD BEEN SUFFUSED.
NOW THE *TRUE* TEST -- THE ATLANTEANS ARE COMING THROUGH WITH SOME CIVILIANS!
AAAGH!
IT WORKED!
WATER!
PHLOOSH!
THE HUMANS ARE FLOUNDERING.
THEN ASSIST THEM -- IT IS THE *LEAST* WE CAN DO NOW.
A SURPRISING ATTITUDE TYRAK... WELCOME HOME...
HOME? YES... WE ARE HOME... THANKS TO *YOUR* EFFORTS.
YOU LOOK *UNWELL* THOUGH, PINK-SKIN.
I CAN'T MAINTAIN THIS -- FOR MUCH LONGER --
-- THOSE INSIDE HAD BEST HURRY...


"...OR SOON, IT WILL BE TOO LATE..."
KEEP THEM OCCUPIED WHILE I ENTER AN INTANGIBLE STATE--
--SOLIDIFYING MYSELF WHILE PHASING THROUGH THEM--
--AND DISRUPTING THEIR METABOLIC PROCESSES!
NOW, GUARDIAN!
GET READY FOR A GRAVITATIONAL SHUNT, FOLKS...
POP!
SURROUND THEM--LINK INTO THEIR GROUP MIND!
WHAT?
MENDEV? VOROSHILOV? WHAT IS THE MEANING OF--


--NO! YOU CANNOT CONTROL US--OUR CAUSE IS JUST!
NO, ILLYICH, MY FRIEND--YOUR ACTIONS--YOUR DECISION TO UNITE THE WORLD THROUGH WAR WAS WRONG!
IT'S TRUE, ILLYICH! AN INTERNATIONAL ENCLAVE OF HEROES HAS SHOWN US THE WAY OF THE FUTURE!
THAT WAY IS THROUGH MIGHT! WE MUST USE FORCE TO FURTHER THE NEEDS OF OUR COUNTRY AND OUR PLANET!
NO, STROKOV--IT'S NOT THROUGH FORCE OF MIGHT, OR THROUGH PERSONAL GREED. WE'VE LEARNED THAT NOW!
IT IS THROUGH MUTUAL DEPENDENCY, MUTUAL COOPERATION, AND MUTUAL DESIRE!
DO YOU SEE INSIDE OUR MINDS NOW, ILLYICH? STROKOV?
I--I--SEE--
THEN WE MUST ATONE FOR THE ERROR OF OUR WAYS, COMRADES.
LOOK AT THE ENERGY SWIRLING INTO THEM!
THEY ARE ABSORBING ALL OF THE EXCESS RADIATION.
AS WE HAD PLANNED ALL ALONG. IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THEIR GROUP MIND, THEY NEED MORE ENERGY.
BUT WHAT IF THE PEACE CORPSE MEMBERS LOSE IN THEIR TEST OF WILLS? WHAT IF ALL OF THAT ENERGY JUST MAKES FOR AN UNSTOPPABLE FOE?

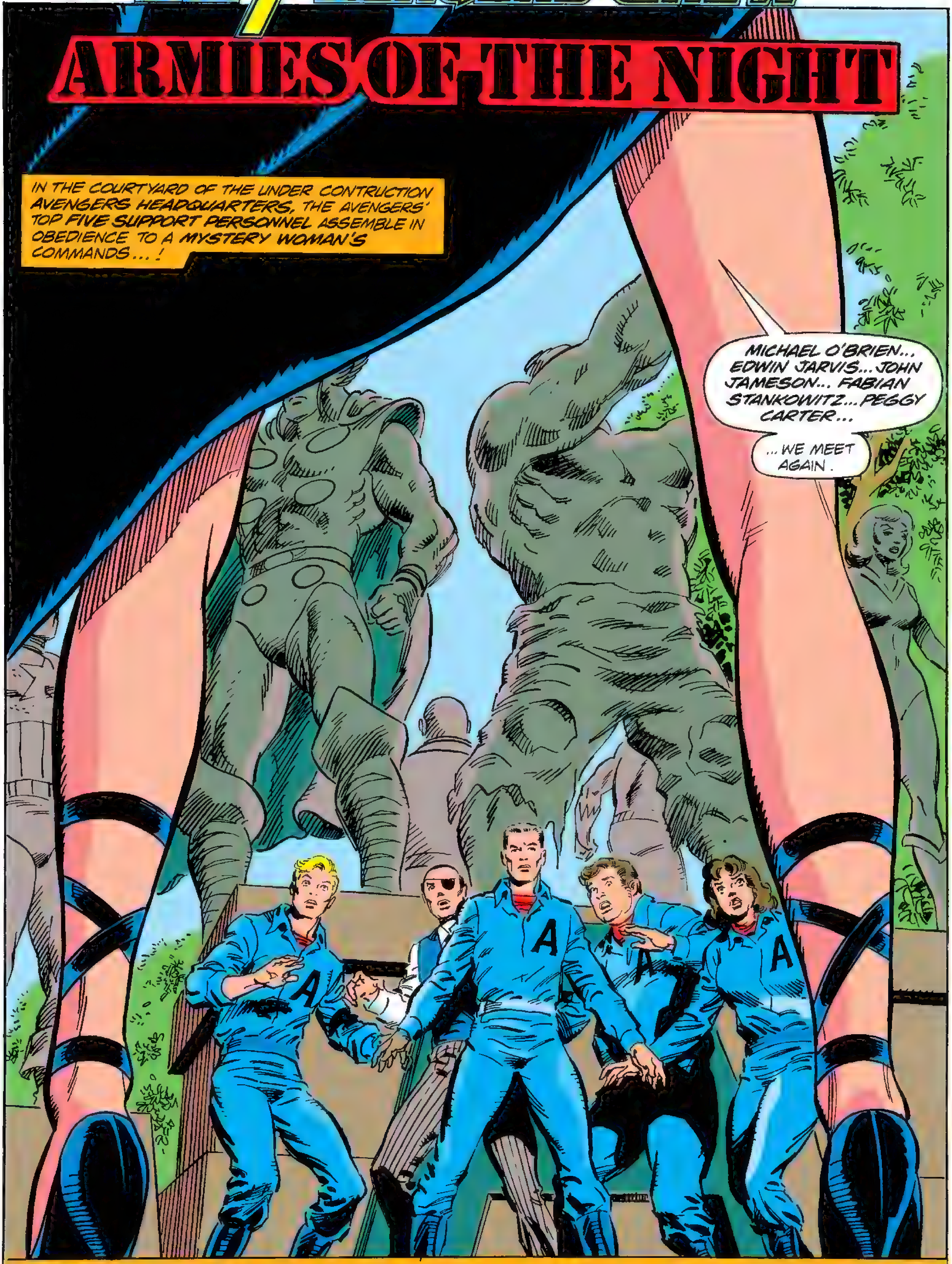

IT IS DONE.
OUR MISSION WAS *FLAWED*. OUR GOALS -- NO MATTER THE INITIAL INTENTIONS -- WERE IMPROPERLY APPROACHED.
IT WORKED.
THANK GOD.
YOU HAVE SHOWN US THAT THE *TRUE* SPIRIT OF NATIONALISM IS *NOT* THROUGH THE DEFENSE OF SELF-DEFINED *BORDERS*...
...OR THE TEMPORARY FULFILLMENT OF POLITICAL *AGENDAS*, BUT THROUGH *SECURITY* AND *UNITY* AS PART OF THE WORLD ORDER.
BUT WHAT WILL YOU DO NOW?
WE WILL SEEK TO GROW AND LEARN.
OUR PLACE NOW, AS A BEING COMPOSED OF MANY DISTINCT COMPONENTS, WILL BE TO EXPLORE THIS MULTIVERSE, WHICH IS MADE UP OF MANY DISTINCT REALITIES.
IT IS IRONIC, BUT APPROPRIATE.
FAREWELL. CONTINUE TO PROTECT OUR PLANET...
THAT'S SOME LIGHT BURST EVEN BY MY STANDARDS!


THE DIMENSIONAL VORTEX APPEARS TO BE CLOSING!
EVERYONE HURRY! WE'VE RUN OUT OF TIME! SHAMAN HAS LOST CONTROL OF THE NEXUS OPENING!
WE DON'T SEEM TO GET MUCH TIME FOR A BREATHER ON THIS MISSION, DO WE?
UGHH-- EUGENE-- I CAN'T HOLD IT--
JUST A MINUTE MORE, MICHAEL-- TRY!
SUCK IT UP, DOC! THE CUTE YUPPIE'S OUT-- JUST A FEW MORE TO GO!
WHAT OF OUR TEAM LEADERS?
THAT'S IT...
I'VE LOST IT...
NNFGH!
MICHAEL, YOU DID IT!
GOOD JOB, SHAMAN!
AND THANK YOU.
I AM SPENT... PHYSICALLY AND SPIRITUALLY...

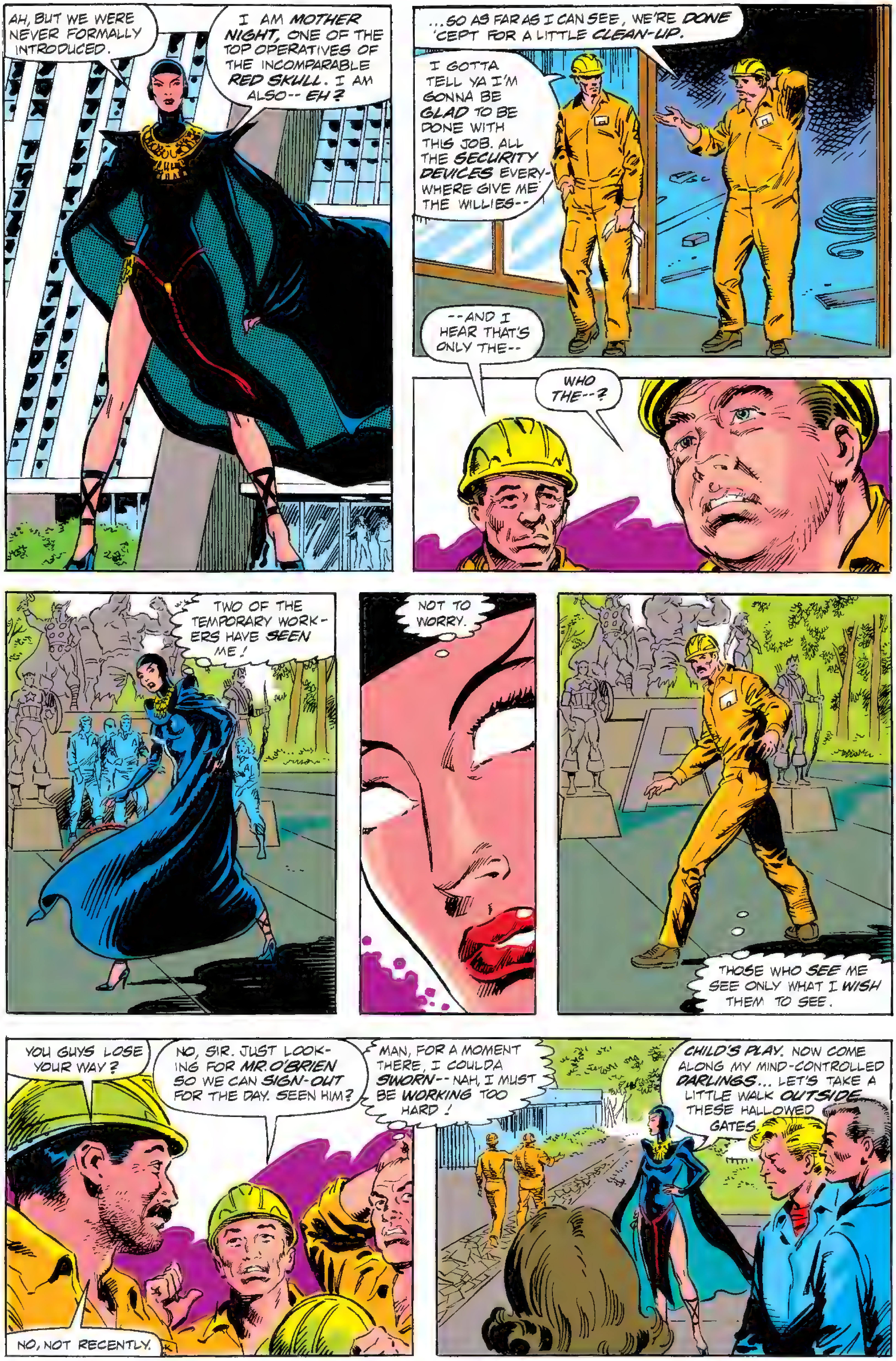

THIRTY MINUTES LATER...
WE THANK YOUR TEAM FOR ITS ASSISTANCE, FANTASMA.
IT WAS FAR BETTER TO WORK *WITH* YOU THAN *AGAINST* YOU, CAPTAIN.
THE ATLANTEANS HAVE LEFT.
YOU SPOKE WITH THEM EARLIER, CAPTAIN. HAVE OUR DIFFERENCES BEEN RESOLVED?
"AS MUCH AS THEY CAN BE, VISION.
"I'VE GIVEN THEM OUR WORD THAT THE UNITED NATIONS TREATED ATTUMA *FAIRLY* IN HIS WAR TRIAL.
"THEY EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THEY COULD RECEIVE ASSISTANCE FOR REPARATIONS TO THEIR CITY AND IN FINDING THEIR MISSING PEOPLE.
"WITH ANY LUCK, THIS ADVENTURE HAS TAUGHT US WE ALL CAN AND SHOULD WORK TOGETHER IN THE FUTURE."
THE PEOPLE'S PROTECTORATE ARE OFF TOO NOW, CAP.
AS ALLIES AND FRIENDS, I'M HAPPY TO SAY.
AS ARE THE AVENGERS TO THE MEMBERS OF ALPHA FLIGHT.
WHAT ABOUT THE PEOPLE OF ST. JOHN'S, GUARDIAN?
NEWFOUNDLANDERS ARE A *HEARTY* LOT, CAP. THE *TOWNIES* AND THE *BAYMEN* WILL PULL THEMSELVES TOGETHER.
CANADA IS GRATEFUL FOR YOUR HELP, AVENGERS.
WE DID OURSELVES AND OUR COUNTRY *PROUD*, GANG.
FUNNY, TO BE A PART OF AN *IDEOLOGICAL* STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE WORLD'S SUPER POWERS, WASN'T IT?
SORT OF MAKES YOU WONDER WHAT THE *WORTH* OF IDEOLOGY *REALLY* AMOUNTS TO, EH?
AFTER ALL, WE DON'T OWE THE *CHILDREN* OF TOMORROW A *BIT* OF OUR IDEOLOGIES AND FOOLISH WAYS.
WE JUST OWE THEM A WORLD IN WHICH *THEY* CAN CHOOSE TO CREATE THEIR *OWN*... FOR THE BETTER, ONE HOPES...
End

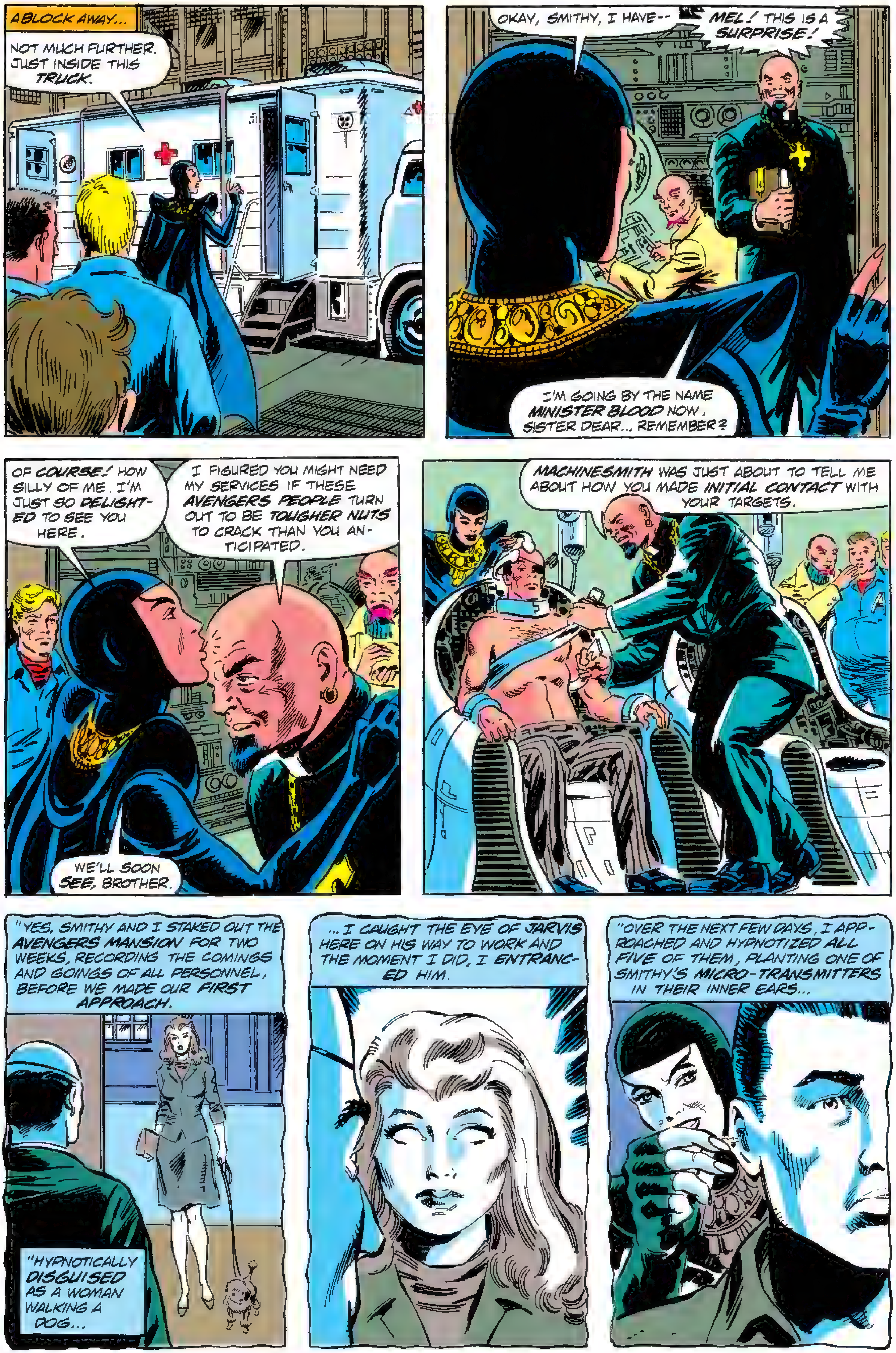
THE AVENGERS CREW

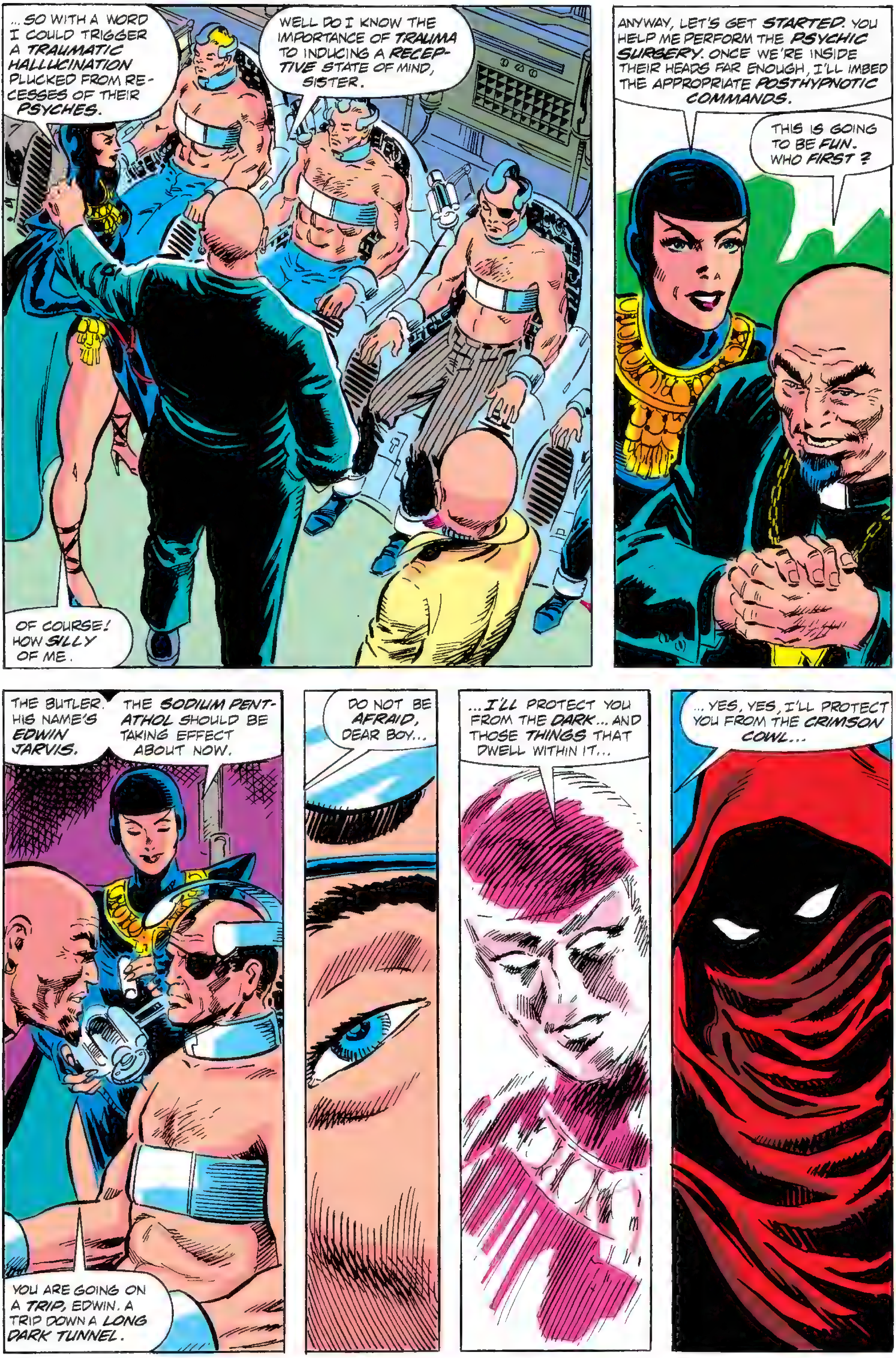
ARMIES OF THE NIGHT

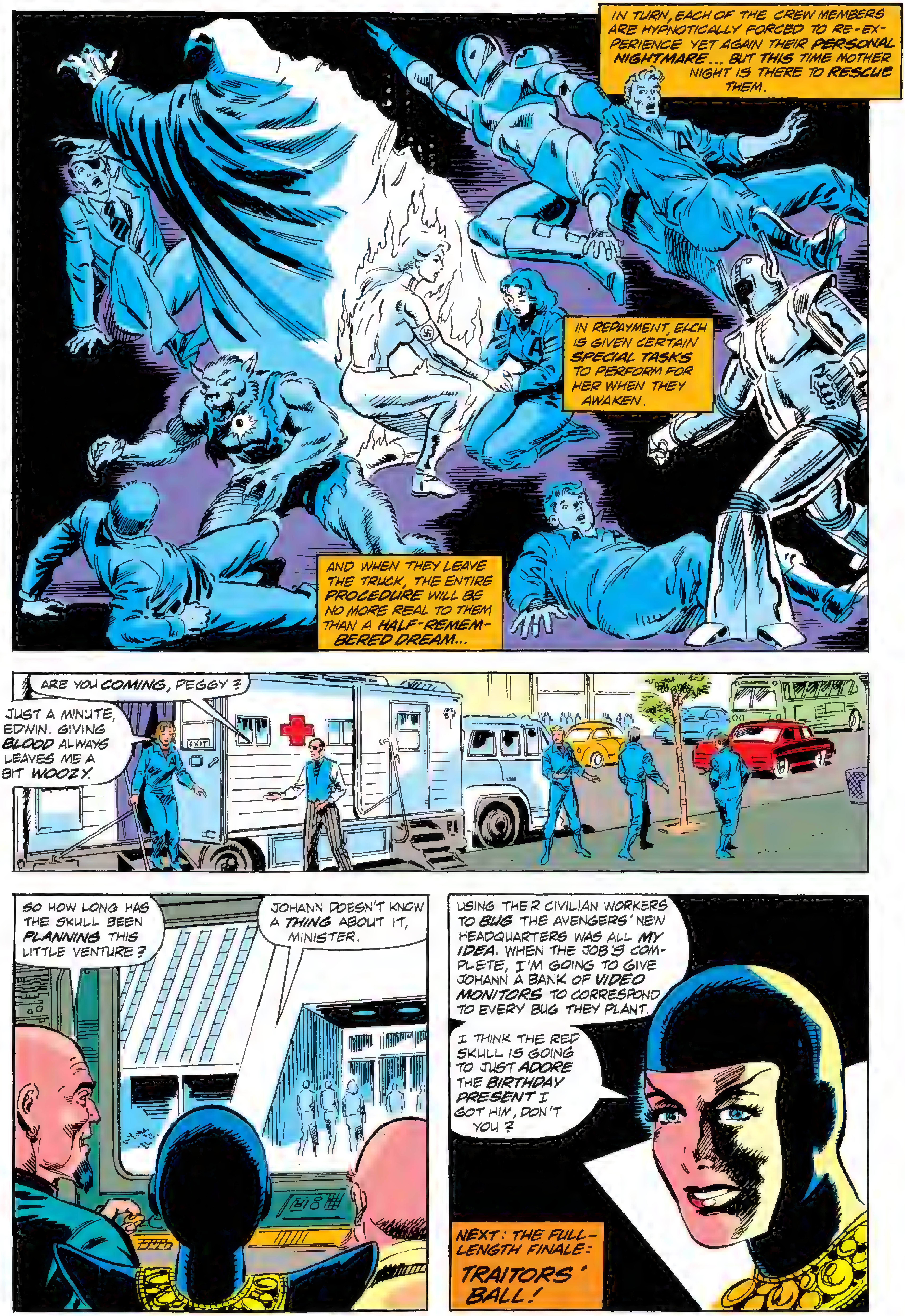

IN THE COURTYARD OF THE UNDER CONTRUCTION AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS, THE AVENGERS' TOP FIVE SUPPORT PERSONNEL ASSEMBLE IN OBEDIENCE TO A MYSTERY WOMAN'S COMMANDS...!
MICHAEL O'BRIEN... EDWIN JARVIS... JOHN JAMESON... FABIAN STANKOWITZ... PEGGY CARTER...
...WE MEET AGAIN.

MARK GRUENWALD STORY
R.K. LEVINS PENCILS
FRED FREDRICKS INKS
CHRIS ELIOPOULOS LETTERS
JOE ROSAS COLORS


AH, BUT WE WERE NEVER FORMALLY INTRODUCED.
I AM MOTHER NIGHT, ONE OF THE TOP OPERATIVES OF THE INCOMPARABLE RED SKULL. I AM ALSO-- EH?
...SO AS FAR AS I CAN SEE, WE'RE DONE 'CEPT FOR A LITTLE CLEAN-UP.
I GOTTA TELL YA I'M GONNA BE GLAD TO BE DONE WITH THIS JOB. ALL THE SECURITY DEVICES EVERYWHERE GIVE ME THE WILLIES--
--AND I HEAR THAT'S ONLY THE--
WHO THE--?
TWO OF THE TEMPORARY WORKERS HAVE SEEN ME!
NOT TO WORRY.
THOSE WHO SEE ME SEE ONLY WHAT I WISH THEM TO SEE.
YOU GUYS LOSE YOUR WAY?
NO, SIR. JUST LOOKING FOR MR. O'BRIEN SO WE CAN SIGN-OUT FOR THE DAY. SEEN HIM?
NO, NOT RECENTLY.
MAN, FOR A MOMENT THERE, I COULDA SWORN-- NAH, I MUST BE WORKING TOO HARD!
CHILD'S PLAY. NOW COME ALONG MY MIND-CONTROLLED DARLINGS... LET'S TAKE A LITTLE WALK OUTSIDE THESE HALLOWED GATES.


A BLOCK AWAY...
NOT MUCH FURTHER. JUST INSIDE THIS TRUCK.
OKAY, SMITHY, I HAVE--
MEL! THIS IS A SURPRISE!
I'M GOING BY THE NAME MINISTER BLOOD NOW, SISTER DEAR... REMEMBER?
OF COURSE! HOW SILLY OF ME. I'M JUST SO DELIGHTED TO SEE YOU HERE.
I FIGURED YOU MIGHT NEED MY SERVICES IF THESE AVENGERS PEOPLE TURN OUT TO BE TOUGHER NUTS TO CRACK THAN YOU ANTICIPATED.
WE'LL SOON SEE, BROTHER.
MACHINESMITH WAS JUST ABOUT TO TELL ME ABOUT HOW YOU MADE INITIAL CONTACT WITH YOUR TARGETS.
"YES, SMITHY AND I STAKED OUT THE AVENGERS MANSION FOR TWO WEEKS, RECORDING THE COMINGS AND GOINGS OF ALL PERSONNEL, BEFORE WE MADE OUR FIRST APPROACH.
"HYPNOTICALLY DISGUISED AS A WOMAN WALKING A DOG...
...I CAUGHT THE EYE OF JARVIS HERE ON HIS WAY TO WORK AND THE MOMENT I DID, I ENTRANCED HIM.
"OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS, I APPROACHED AND HYPNOTIZED ALL FIVE OF THEM, PLANTING ONE OF SMITHY'S MICRO-TRANSMITTERS IN THEIR INNER EARS...


...SO WITH A WORD I COULD TRIGGER A TRAUMATIC HALLUCINATION PLUCKED FROM RECESSES OF THEIR PSYCHES.
WELL DO I KNOW THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAUMA TO INDUCING A RECEPTIVE STATE OF MIND, SISTER.
OF COURSE! HOW SILLY OF ME.
ANYWAY, LET'S GET STARTED. YOU HELP ME PERFORM THE PSYCHIC SURGERY. ONCE WE'RE INSIDE THEIR HEADS FAR ENOUGH, I'LL IMBED THE APPROPRIATE POSTHYPNOTIC COMMANDS.
THIS IS GOING TO BE FUN. WHO FIRST?
THE BUTLER. HIS NAME'S EDWIN JARVIS.
THE SODIUM PENTATHOL SHOULD BE TAKING EFFECT ABOUT NOW.
YOU ARE GOING ON A TRIP, EDWIN. A TRIP DOWN A LONG DARK TUNNEL.
DO NOT BE AFRAID, DEAR BOY...
...I'LL PROTECT YOU FROM THE DARK... AND THOSE THINGS THAT DWELL WITHIN IT...
...YES, YES, I'LL PROTECT YOU FROM THE CRIMSON COWL...


IN TURN, EACH OF THE CREW MEMBERS ARE HYPNOTICALLY FORCED TO RE-EXPERIENCE YET AGAIN THEIR PERSONAL NIGHTMARE... BUT THIS TIME MOTHER NIGHT IS THERE TO RESCUE THEM.
IN REPAYMENT, EACH IS GIVEN CERTAIN SPECIAL TASKS TO PERFORM FOR HER WHEN THEY AWAKEN.
AND WHEN THEY LEAVE THE TRUCK, THE ENTIRE PROCEDURE WILL BE NO MORE REAL TO THEM THAN A HALF-REMEMBERED DREAM...
ARE YOU COMING, PEGGY ?
JUST A MINUTE, EDWIN. GIVING BLOOD ALWAYS LEAVES ME A BIT WOOZY.
EXIT
SO HOW LONG HAS THE SKULL BEEN PLANNING THIS LITTLE VENTURE ?
JOHANN DOESN'T KNOW A THING ABOUT IT, MINISTER.
USING THEIR CIVILIAN WORKERS TO BUG THE AVENGERS' NEW HEADQUARTERS WAS ALL MY IDEA. WHEN THE JOB'S COMPLETE, I'M GOING TO GIVE JOHANN A BANK OF VIDEO MONITORS TO CORRESPOND TO EVERY BUG THEY PLANT.
I THINK THE RED SKULL IS GOING TO JUST ADORE THE BIRTHDAY PRESENT I GOT HIM, DON'T YOU ?
NEXT: THE FULL-LENGTH FINALE: TRAITORS' BALL!

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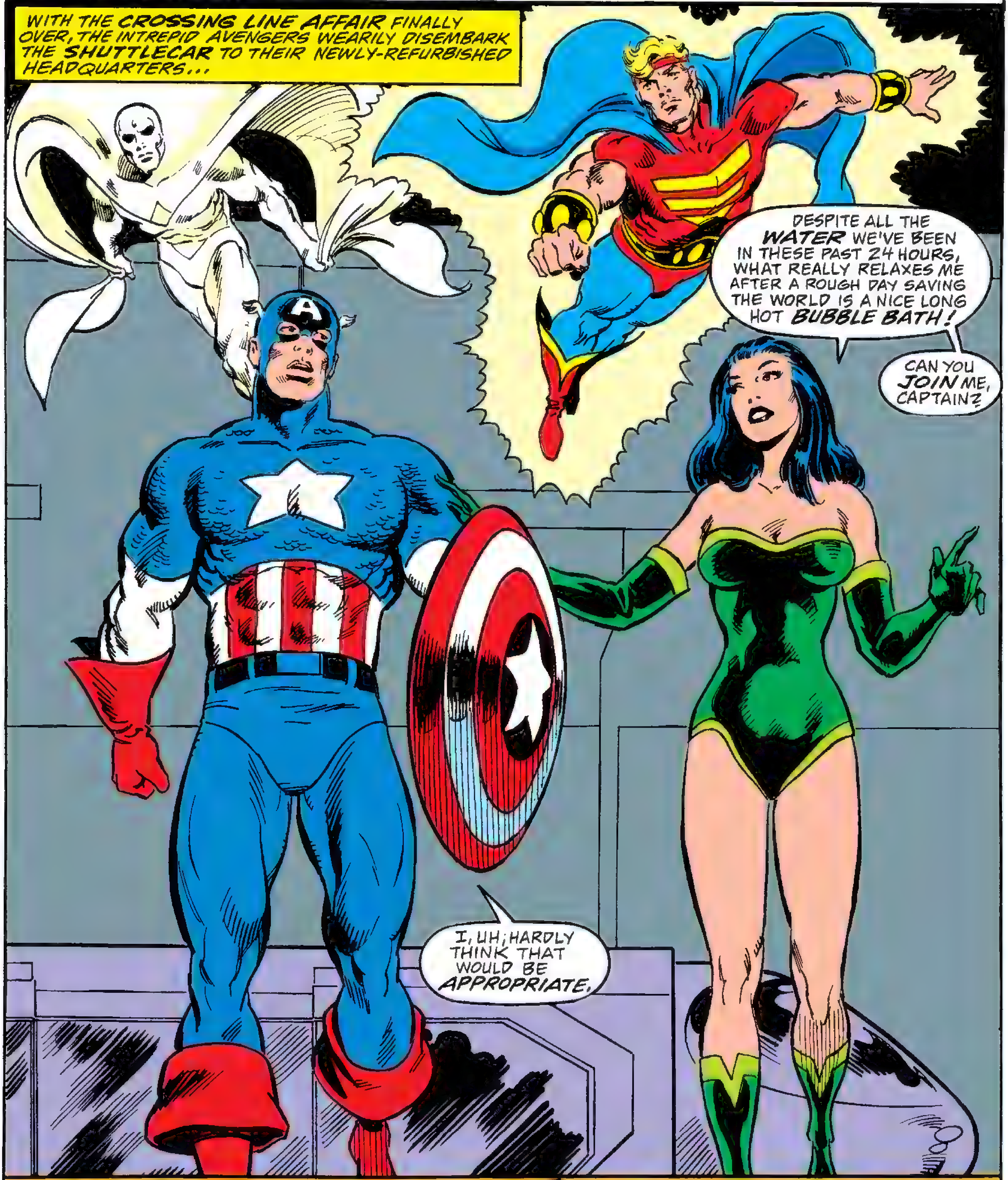
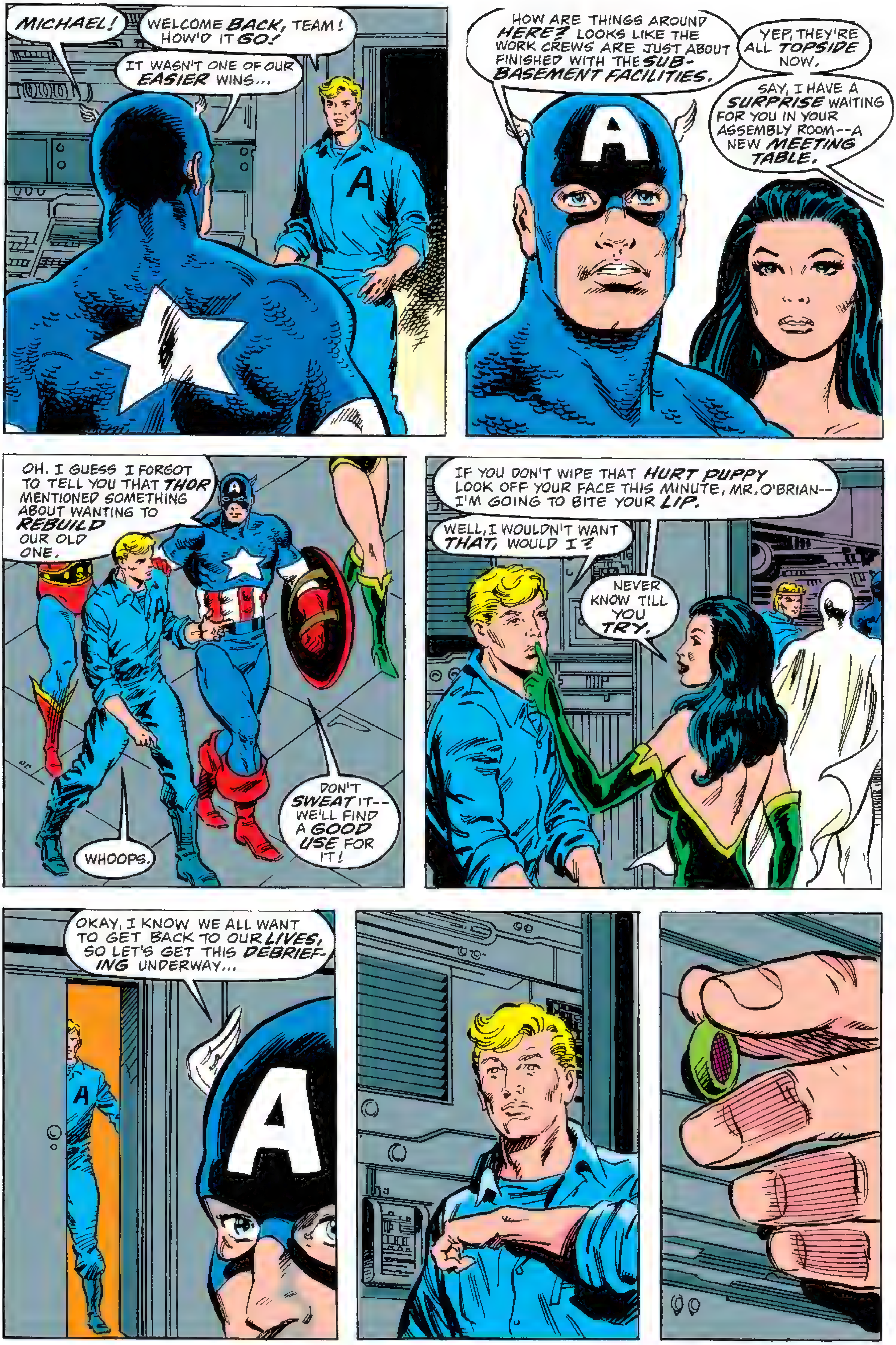
UH, CAP-- DID YOU INVITE THESE PEOPLE?
DON'T LOOK AT ME, QUASAR-- IT'S SERSI'S PARTY!

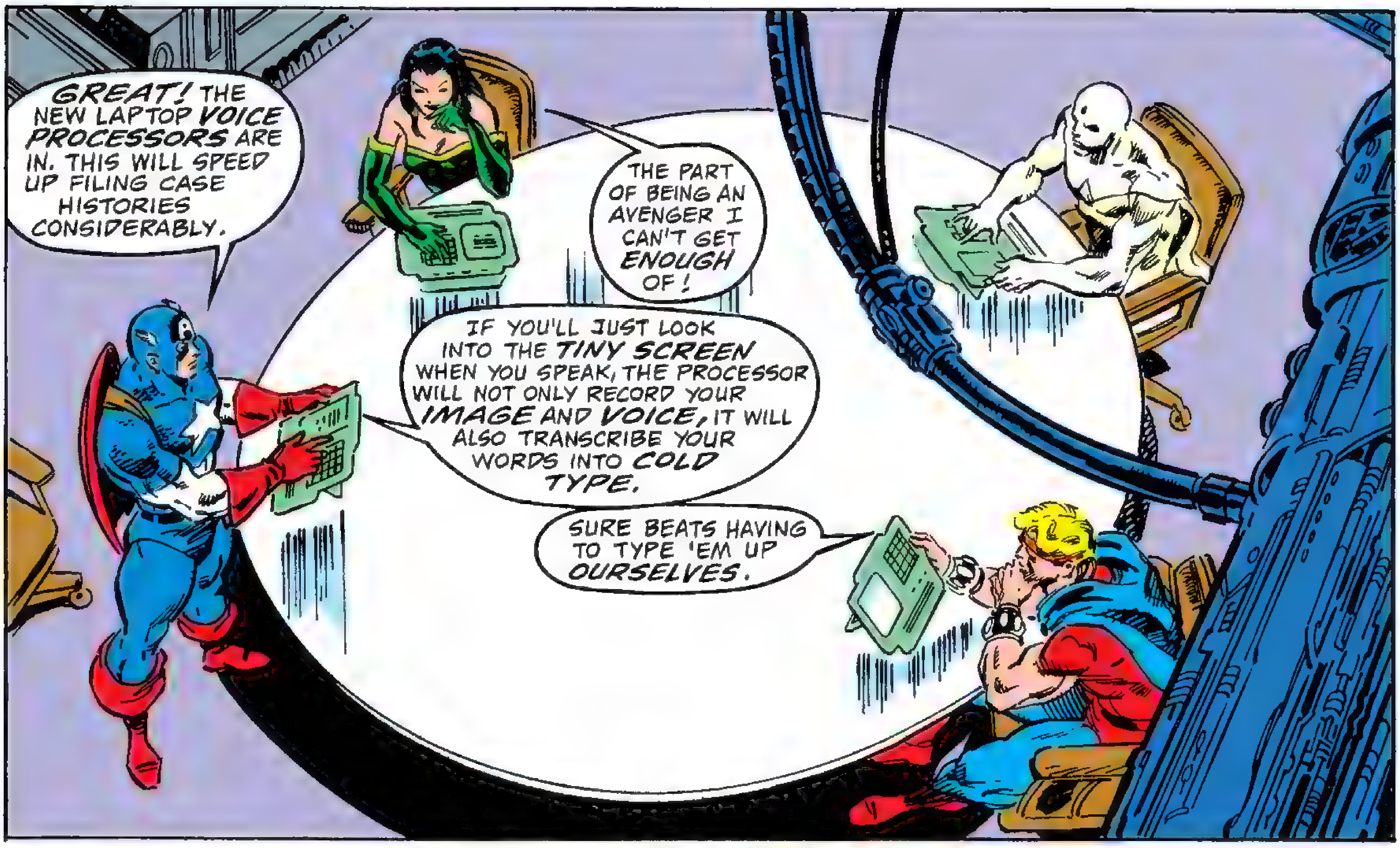
TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND!
STAN LEE PRESENTS . . . **THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!**

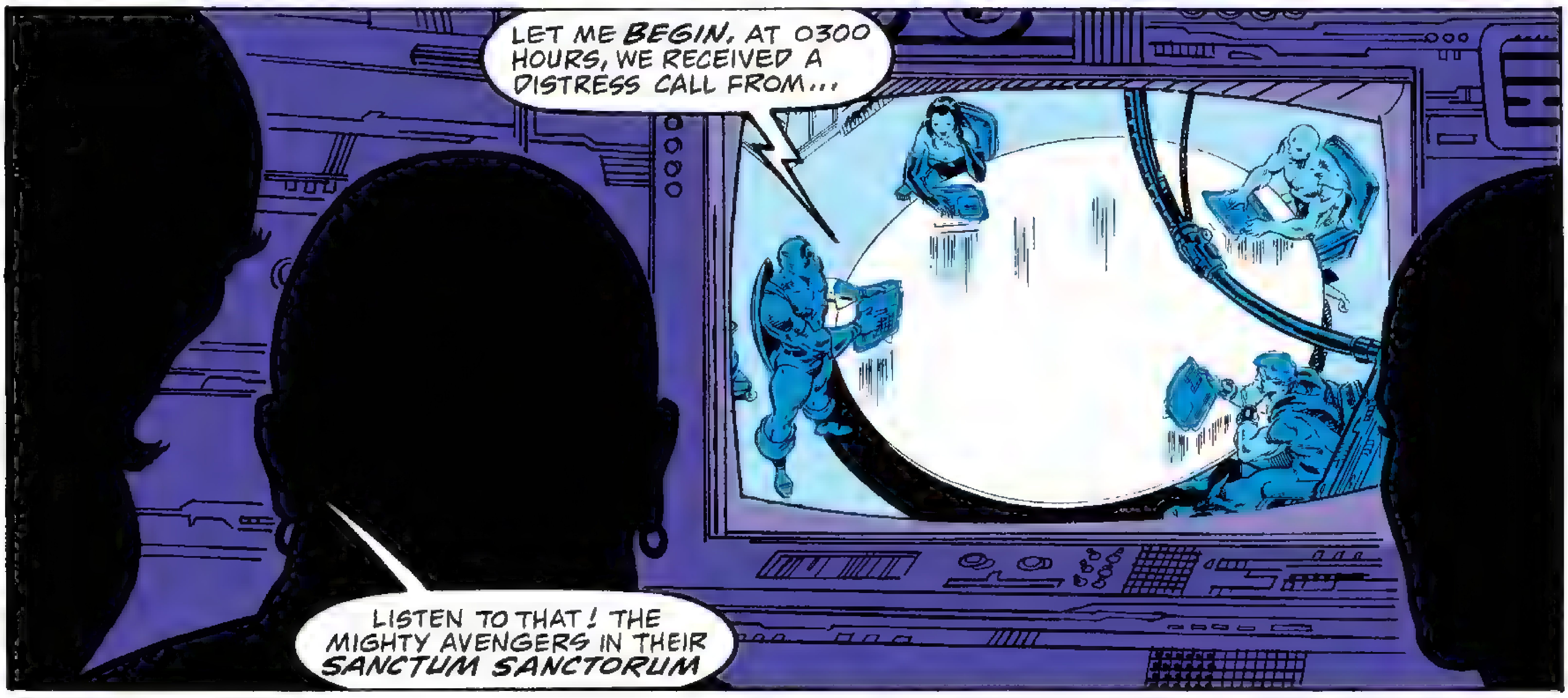

WITH THE CROSSING LINE AFFAIR FINALLY OVER, THE INTREPID AVENGERS WEARILY DISEMBARK THE SHUTTLECAR TO THEIR NEWLY-REFURBISHED HEADQUARTERS...
DESPITE ALL THE WATER WE'VE BEEN IN THESE PAST 24 HOURS, WHAT REALLY RELAXES ME AFTER A ROUGH DAY SAVING THE WORLD IS A NICE LONG HOT BUBBLE BATH!
CAN YOU JOIN ME, CAPTAIN?
I, UH; HARDLY THINK THAT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE.

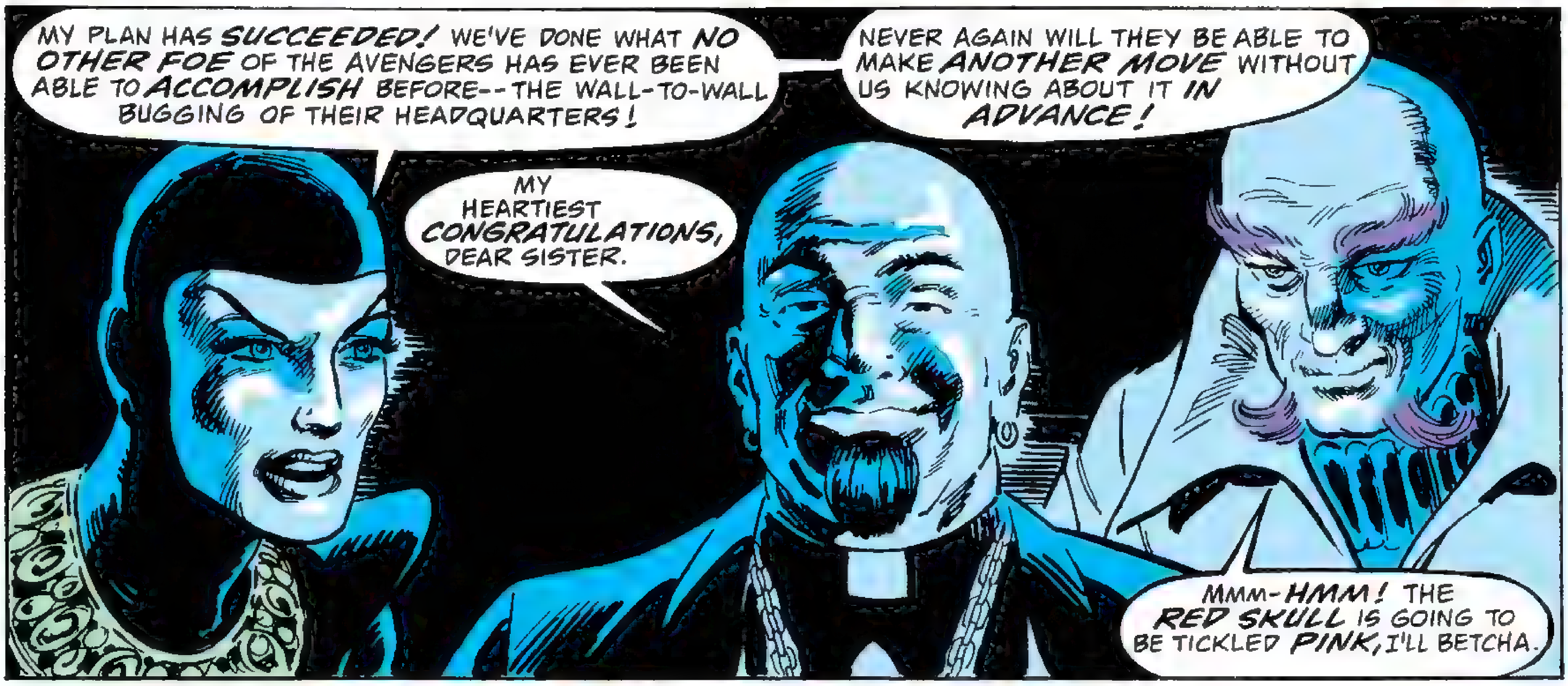
PARTY GAMES!

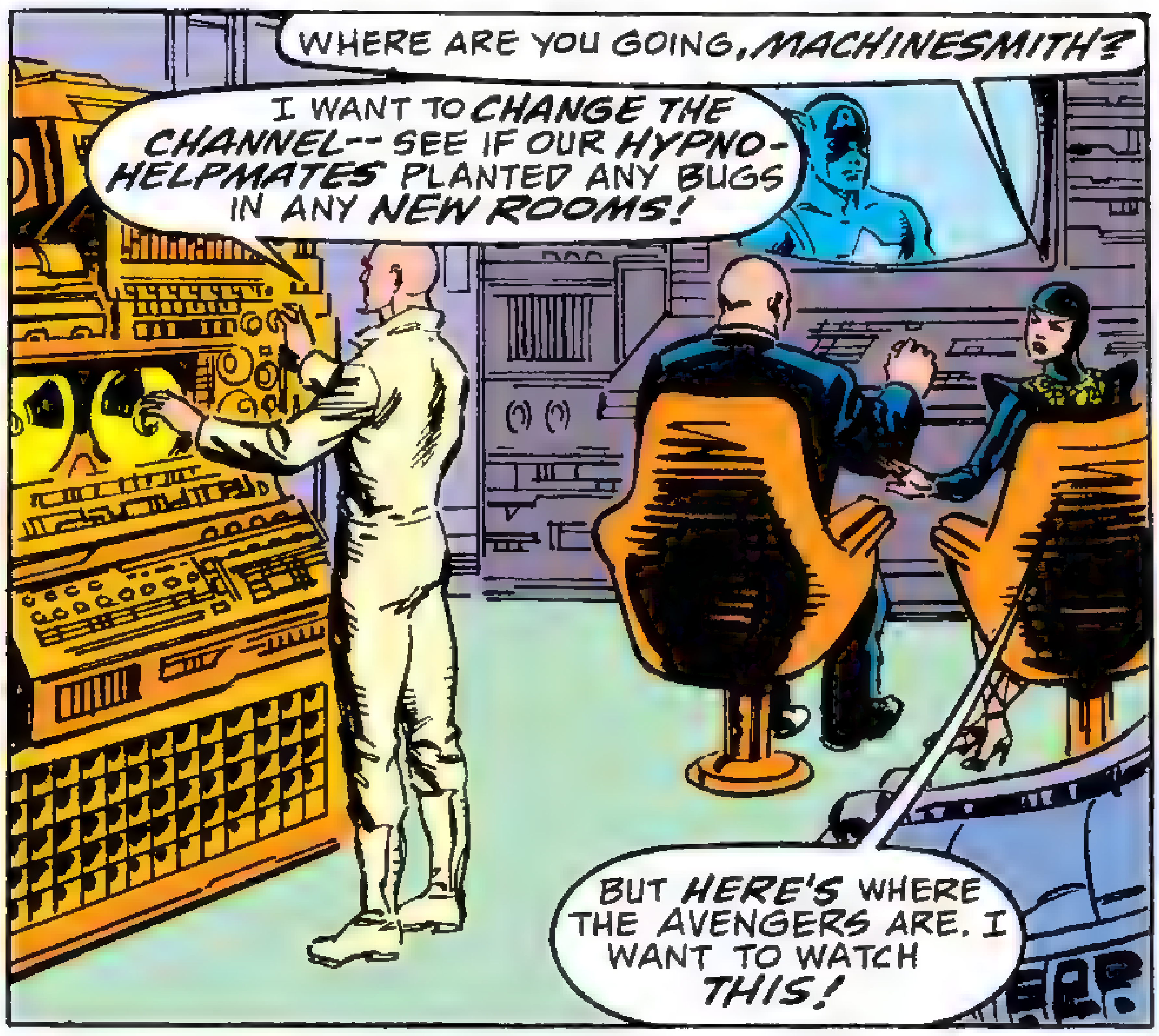
MARK GRUENWALD STORY
RIK LEVINS PENCILS
FRED FREDERICKS & D.HANDS INKS
BRAD K. JOYCE LETTERS
ED LAZELLARI COLORS
HOWARD MACKIE EDITS
TOM DEFALCO PARTY FAVORS

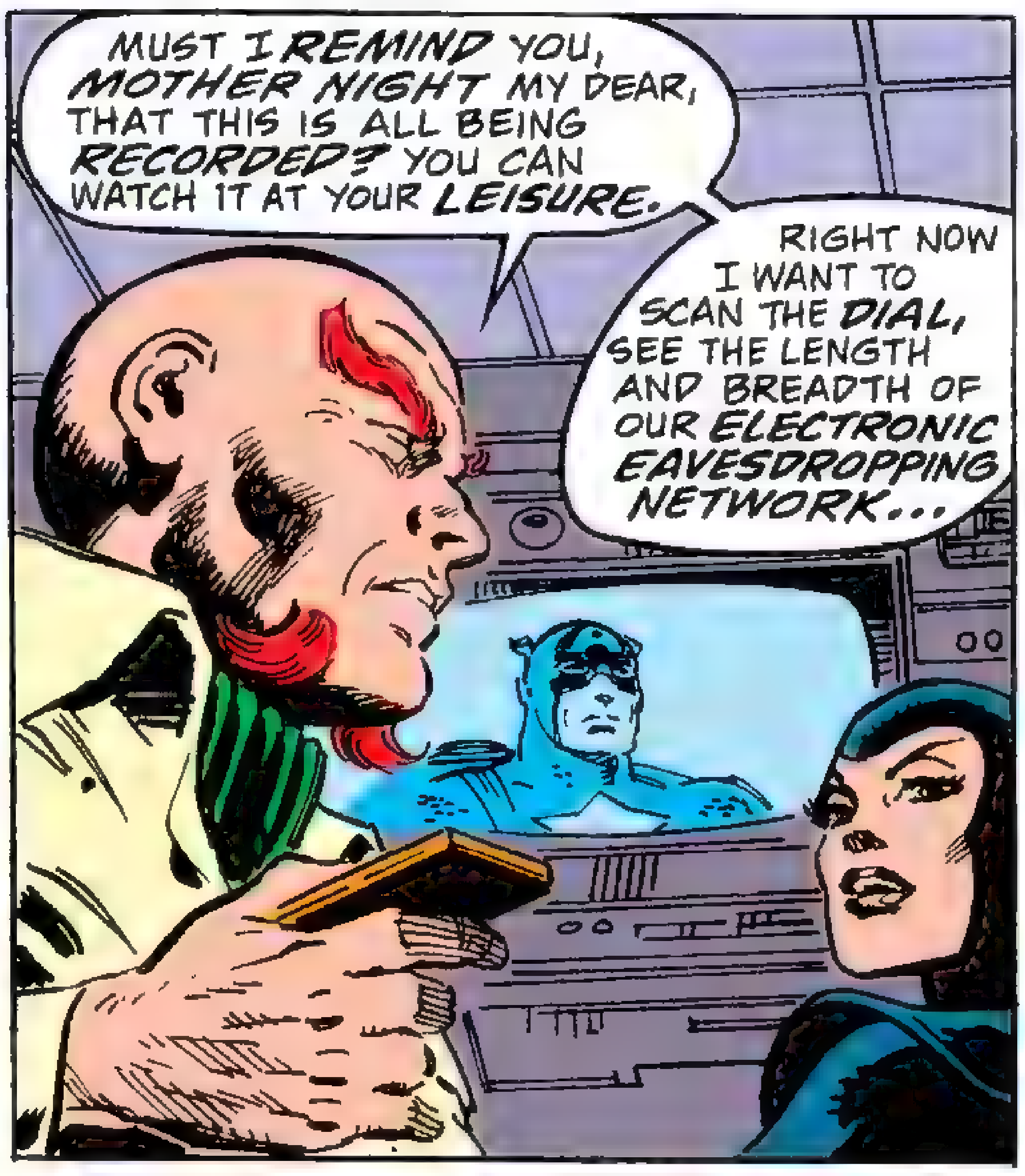

MICHAEL!
WELCOME BACK, TEAM! HOW'D IT GO?
IT WASN'T ONE OF OUR EASIER WINS...
HOW ARE THINGS AROUND HERE? LOOKS LIKE THE WORK CREWS ARE JUST ABOUT FINISHED WITH THE SUB-BASEMENT FACILITIES.
YEP, THEY'RE ALL TOPSIDE NOW.
SAY, I HAVE A SURPRISE WAITING FOR YOU IN YOUR ASSEMBLY ROOM--A NEW MEETING TABLE.
OH. I GUESS I FORGOT TO TELL YOU THAT THOR MENTIONED SOMETHING ABOUT WANTING TO REBUILD OUR OLD ONE.
WHOOPS.
DON'T SWEAT IT--WE'LL FIND A GOOD USE FOR IT!
IF YOU DON'T WIPE THAT HURT PUPPY LOOK OFF YOUR FACE THIS MINUTE, MR. O'BRIAN--I'M GOING TO BITE YOUR LIP.
WELL, I WOULDN'T WANT THAT, WOULD I?
NEVER KNOW TILL YOU TRY.
OKAY, I KNOW WE ALL WANT TO GET BACK TO OUR LIVES, SO LET'S GET THIS DEBRIEFING UNDERWAY...

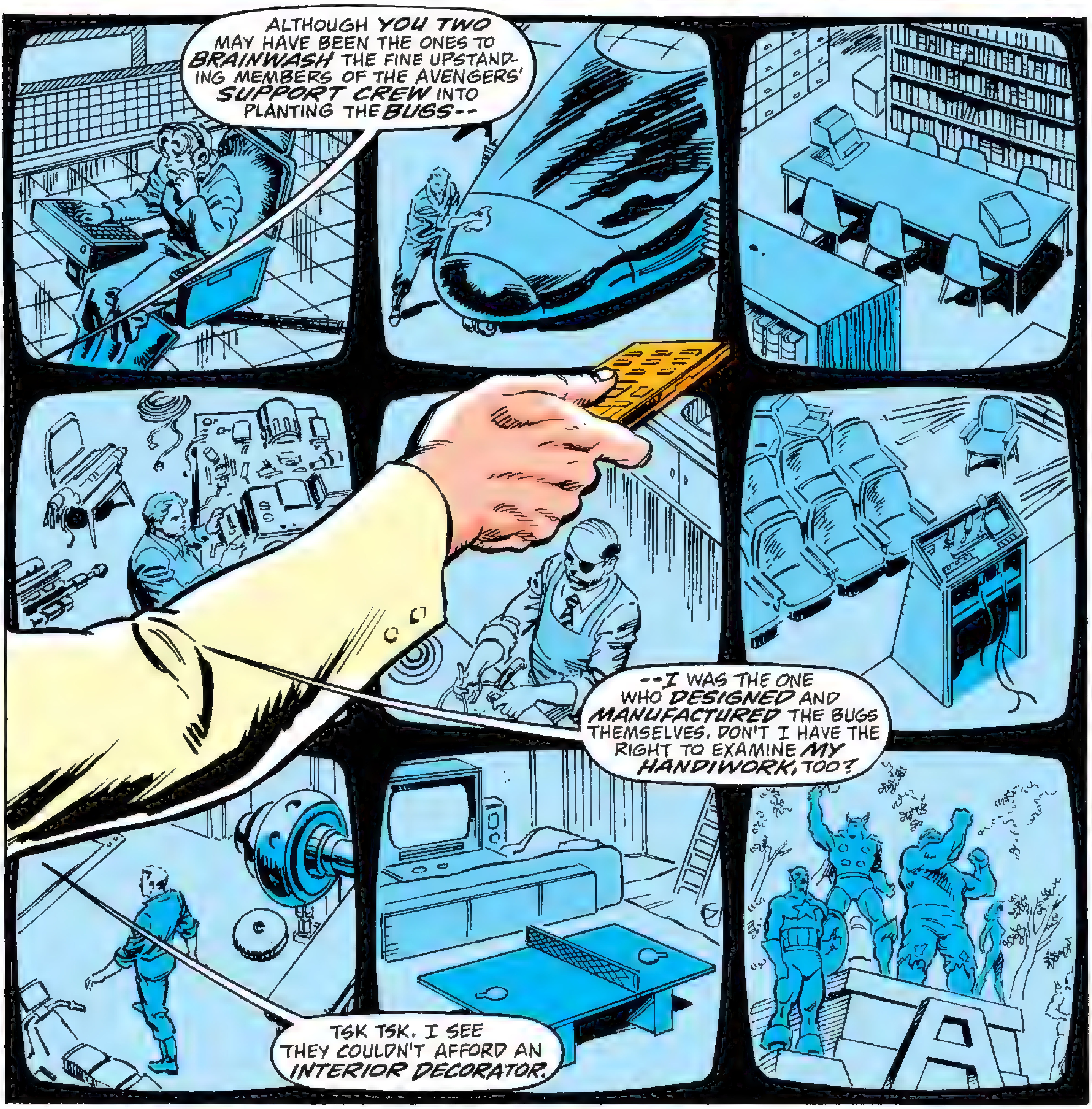

GREAT! THE NEW LAPTOP VOICE PROCESSORS ARE IN. THIS WILL SPEED UP FILING CASE HISTORIES CONSIDERABLY.
THE PART OF BEING AN AVENGER I CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF!
IF YOU'LL JUST LOOK INTO THE TINY SCREEN WHEN YOU SPEAK, THE PROCESSOR WILL NOT ONLY RECORD YOUR IMAGE AND VOICE, IT WILL ALSO TRANSCRIBE YOUR WORDS INTO COLD TYPE.
SURE BEATS HAVING TO TYPE 'EM UP OURSELVES.

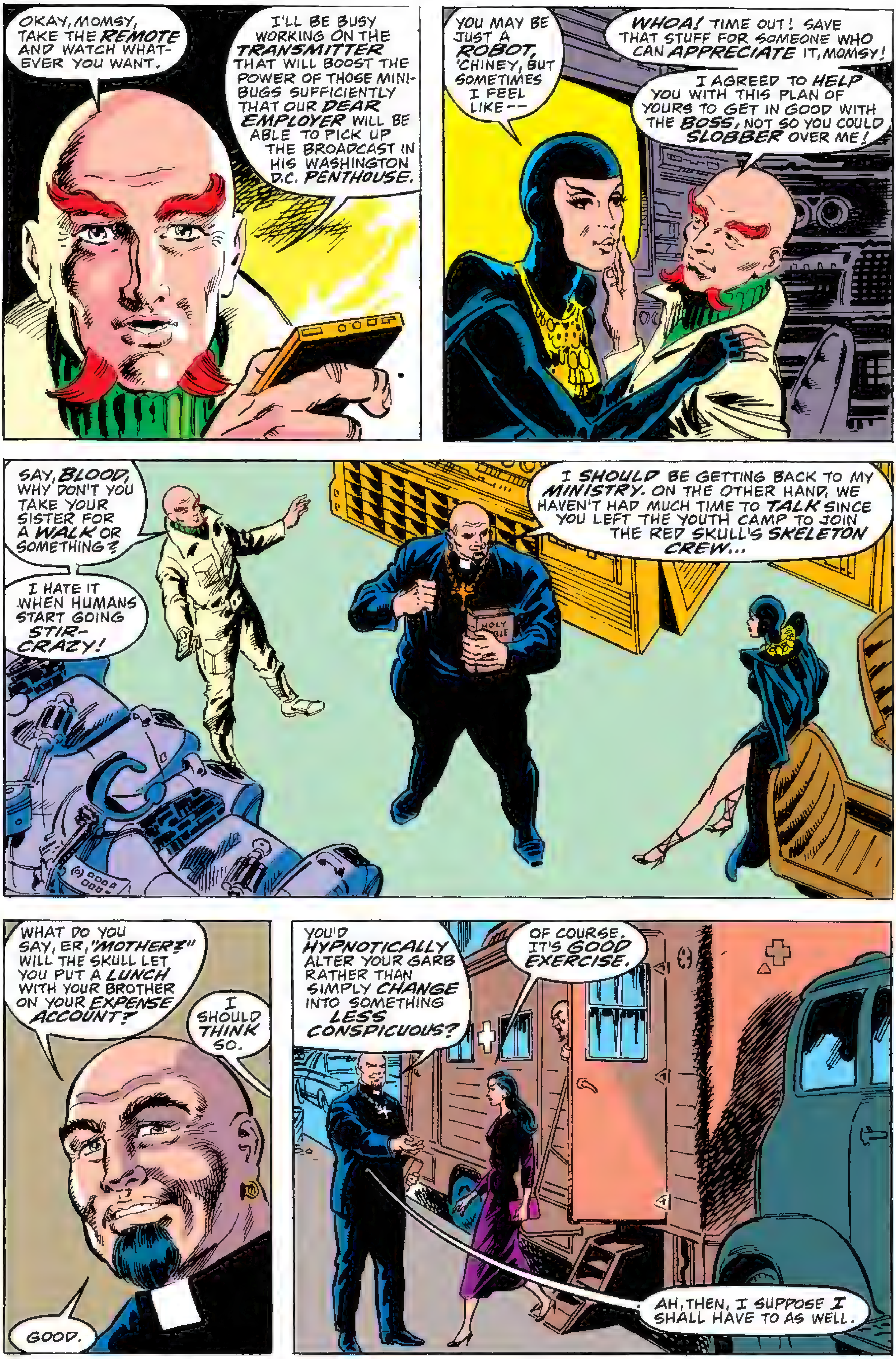

LET ME BEGIN. AT 0300 HOURS, WE RECEIVED A DISTRESS CALL FROM...
LISTEN TO THAT! THE MIGHTY AVENGERS IN THEIR SANCTUM SANCTORUM

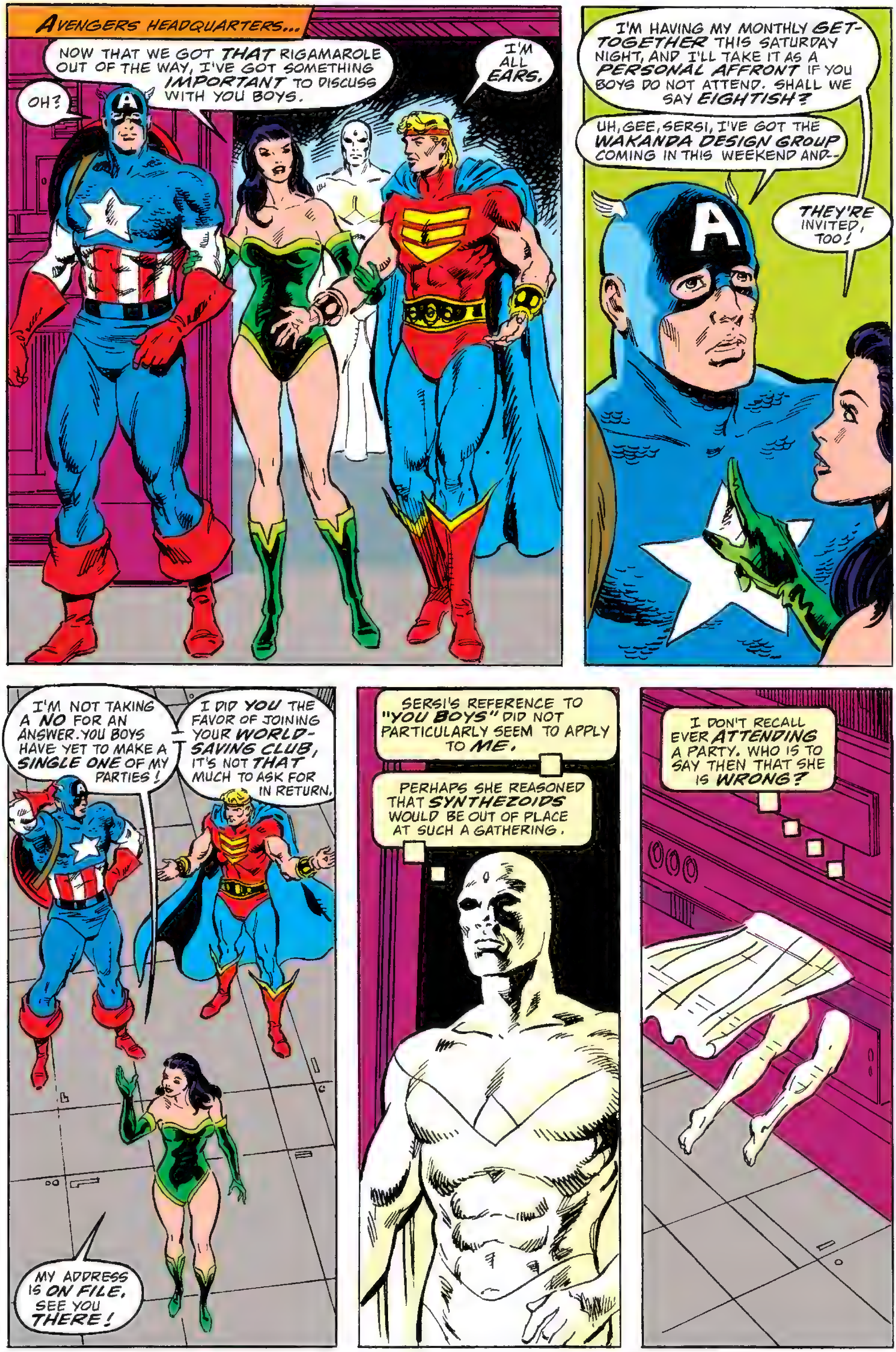

MY PLAN HAS SUCCEEDED! WE'VE DONE WHAT NO OTHER FOE OF THE AVENGERS HAS EVER BEEN ABLE TO ACCOMPLISH BEFORE--THE WALL-TO-WALL BUGGING OF THEIR HEADQUARTERS!
NEVER AGAIN WILL THEY BE ABLE TO MAKE ANOTHER MOVE WITHOUT US KNOWING ABOUT IT IN ADVANCE!
MY HEARTIEST CONGRATULATIONS, DEAR SISTER.
MMM-HMM! THE RED SKULL IS GOING TO BE TICKLED PINK, I'LL BETCHA.

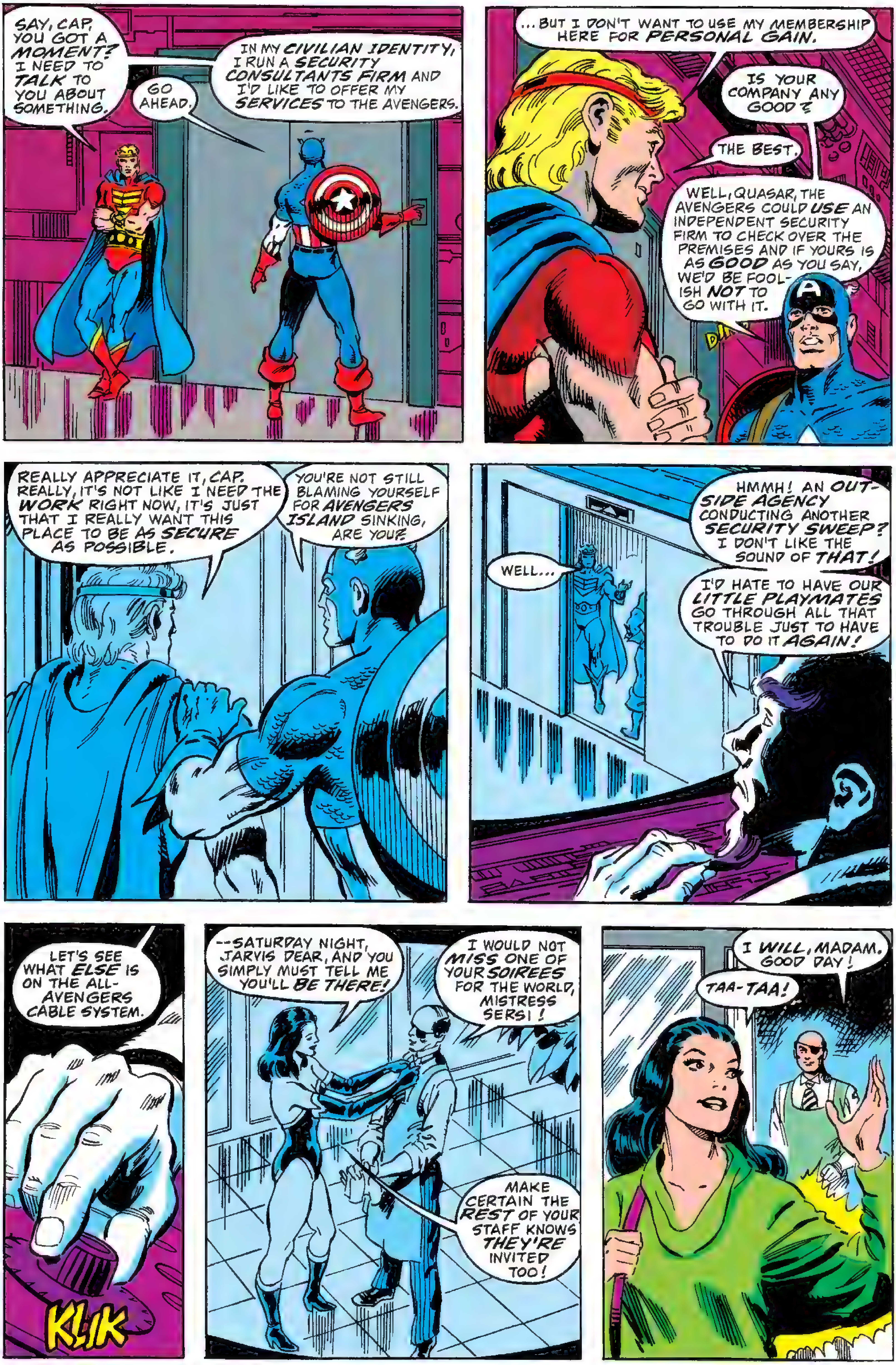

WHERE ARE YOU GOING, *MACHINESMITH?*
I WANT TO *CHANGE THE CHANNEL*-- SEE IF OUR *HYPNO-HELPMATES* PLANTED ANY BUGS IN ANY *NEW ROOMS!*
BUT *HERE'S* WHERE THE AVENGERS ARE. I WANT TO WATCH *THIS!*

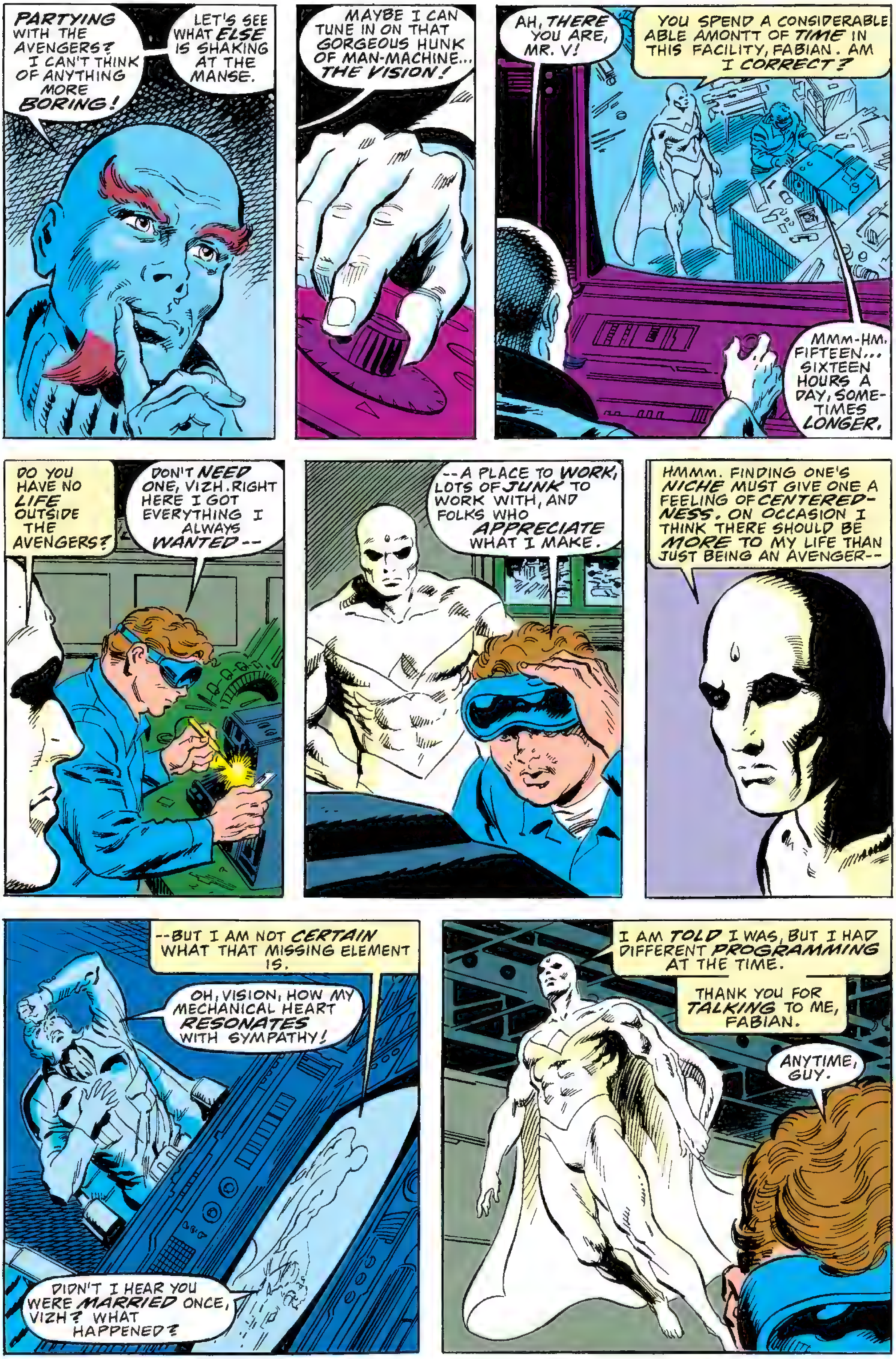

MUST I *REMIND* YOU, *MOTHER NIGHT* MY DEAR, THAT THIS IS ALL BEING *RECORDED?* YOU CAN WATCH IT AT YOUR *LEISURE.*
RIGHT NOW I WANT TO SCAN THE *DIAL,* SEE THE LENGTH AND BREADTH OF OUR *ELECTRONIC EAVESDROPPING NETWORK...*

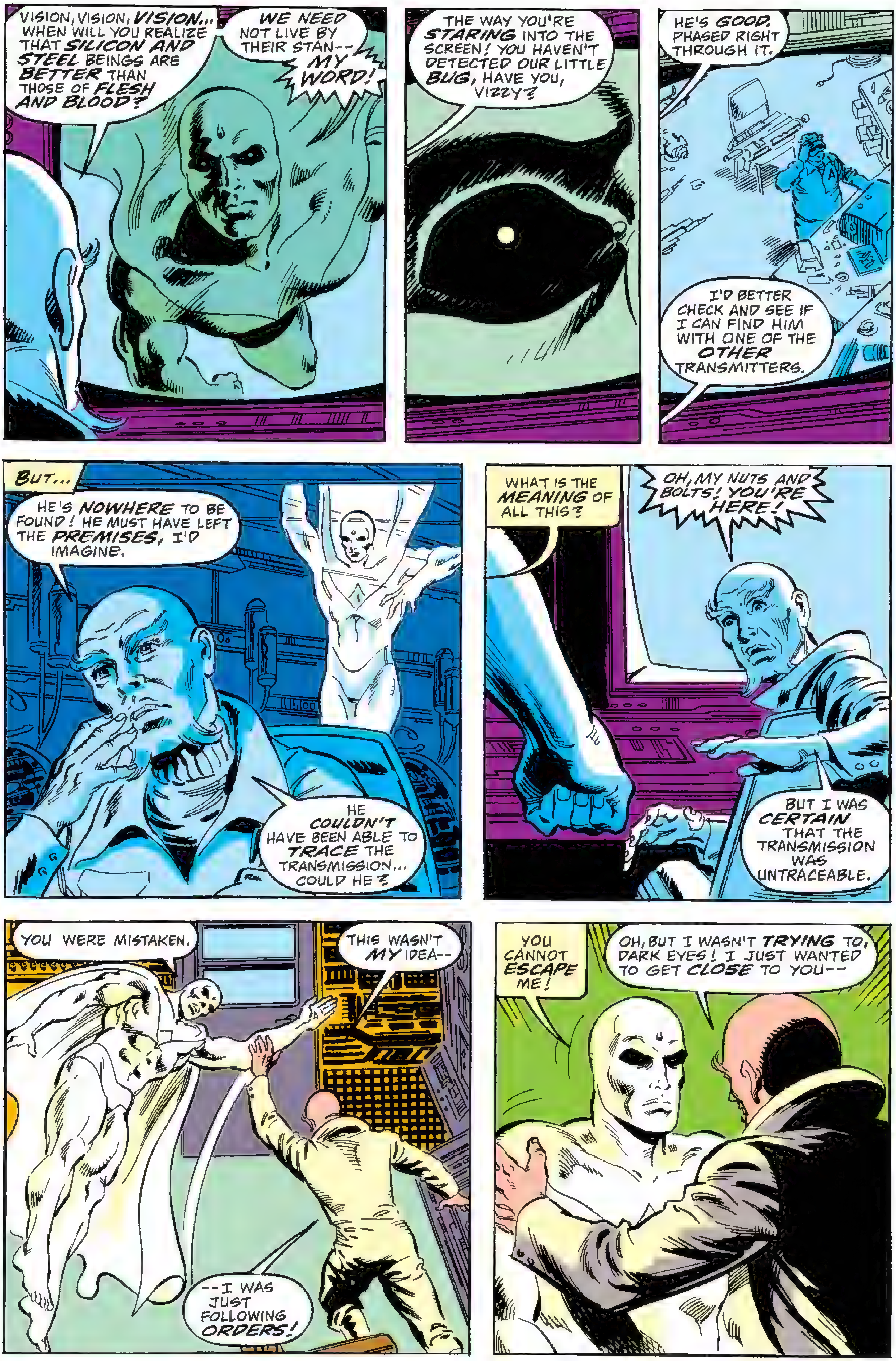

ALTHOUGH *YOU TWO* MAY HAVE BEEN THE ONES TO *BRAINWASH* THE FINE UPSTANDING MEMBERS OF THE AVENGERS' *SUPPORT CREW* INTO PLANTING THE *BUGS*--
--*I* WAS THE ONE WHO *DESIGNED* AND *MANUFACTURED* THE BUGS THEMSELVES. DON'T I HAVE THE RIGHT TO EXAMINE *MY HANDIWORK,* TOO?
TSK TSK. I SEE THEY COULDN'T AFFORD AN *INTERIOR DECORATOR.*
A

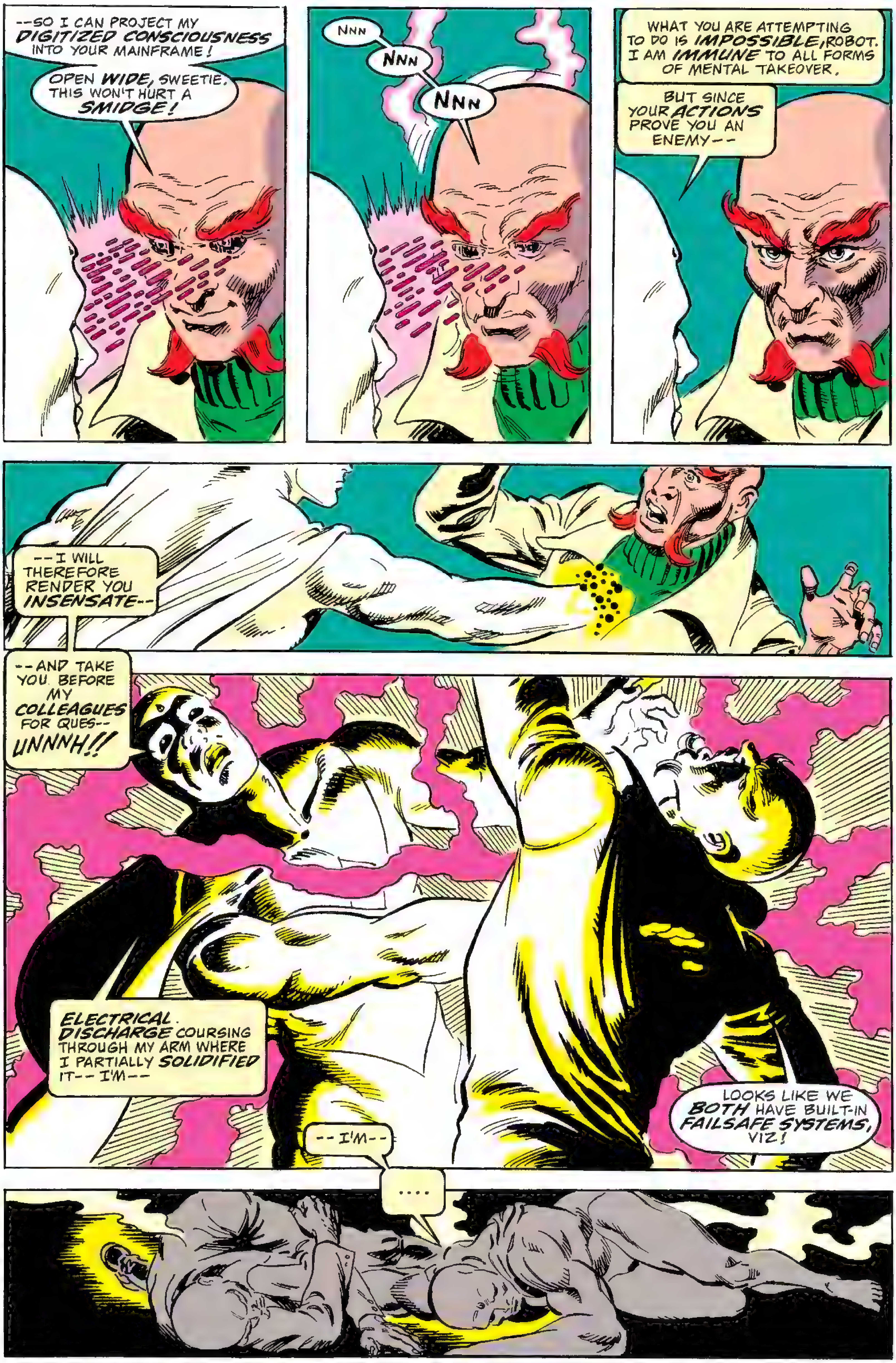

OKAY, MOMSY, TAKE THE REMOTE AND WATCH WHATEVER YOU WANT.
I'LL BE BUSY WORKING ON THE TRANSMITTER THAT WILL BOOST THE POWER OF THOSE MINI-BUGS SUFFICIENTLY THAT OUR DEAR EMPLOYER WILL BE ABLE TO PICK UP THE BROADCAST IN HIS WASHINGTON D.C. PENTHOUSE.
YOU MAY BE JUST A ROBOT, 'CHINEY, BUT SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE--
WHOA! TIME OUT! SAVE THAT STUFF FOR SOMEONE WHO CAN APPRECIATE IT, MOMSY!
I AGREED TO HELP YOU WITH THIS PLAN OF YOURS TO GET IN GOOD WITH THE BOSS, NOT SO YOU COULD SLOBBER OVER ME!
SAY, BLOOD, WHY DON'T YOU TAKE YOUR SISTER FOR A WALK OR SOMETHING?
I HATE IT WHEN HUMANS START GOING STIR-CRAZY!
I SHOULD BE GETTING BACK TO MY MINISTRY. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE HAVEN'T HAD MUCH TIME TO TALK SINCE YOU LEFT THE YOUTH CAMP TO JOIN THE RED SKULL'S SKELETON CREW...
HOLY BIBLE
WHAT DO YOU SAY, ER, "MOTHER?" WILL THE SKULL LET YOU PUT A LUNCH WITH YOUR BROTHER ON YOUR EXPENSE ACCOUNT?
I SHOULD THINK SO.
GOOD.
YOU'D HYPNOTICALLY ALTER YOUR GARB RATHER THAN SIMPLY CHANGE INTO SOMETHING LESS CONSPICUOUS?
OF COURSE. IT'S GOOD EXERCISE.
AH, THEN, I SUPPOSE I SHALL HAVE TO AS WELL.

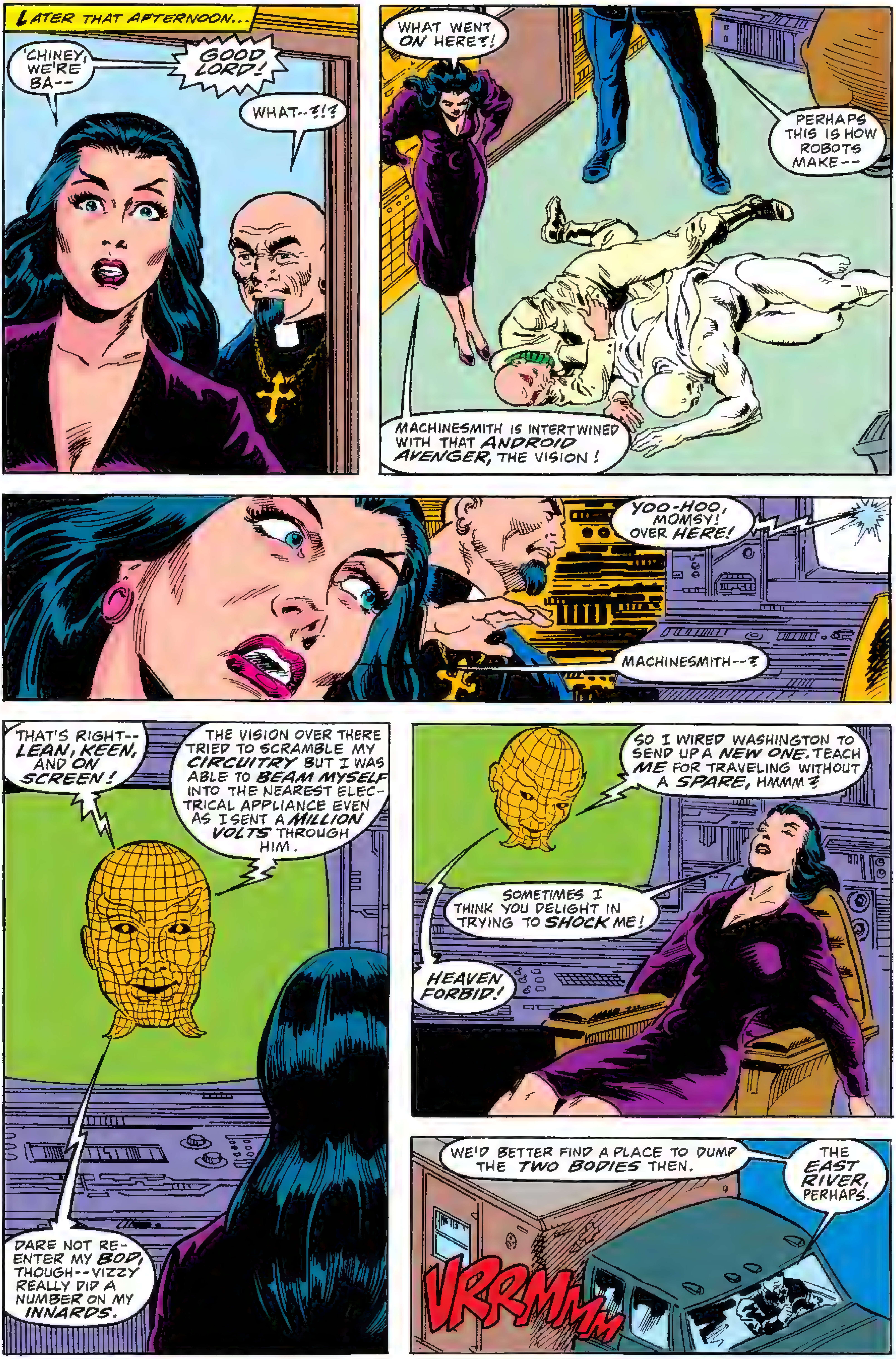

AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS...
NOW THAT WE GOT THAT RIGAMAROLE OUT OF THE WAY, I'VE GOT SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO DISCUSS WITH YOU BOYS.
OH?
I'M ALL EARS.
I'M HAVING MY MONTHLY GET-TOGETHER THIS SATURDAY NIGHT, AND I'LL TAKE IT AS A PERSONAL AFFRONT IF YOU BOYS DO NOT ATTEND. SHALL WE SAY EIGHTISH?
UH, GEE, SERSI, I'VE GOT THE WAKANDA DESIGN GROUP COMING IN THIS WEEKEND AND--
THEY'RE INVITED, TOO!
I'M NOT TAKING A NO FOR AN ANSWER. YOU BOYS HAVE YET TO MAKE A SINGLE ONE OF MY PARTIES!
I DID YOU THE FAVOR OF JOINING YOUR WORLD-SAVING CLUB, IT'S NOT THAT MUCH TO ASK FOR IN RETURN.
MY ADDRESS IS ON FILE. SEE YOU THERE!
SERSI'S REFERENCE TO "YOU BOYS" DID NOT PARTICULARLY SEEM TO APPLY TO ME.
PERHAPS SHE REASONED THAT SYNTHEZOIDS WOULD BE OUT OF PLACE AT SUCH A GATHERING.
I DON'T RECALL EVER ATTENDING A PARTY. WHO IS TO SAY THEN THAT SHE IS WRONG?

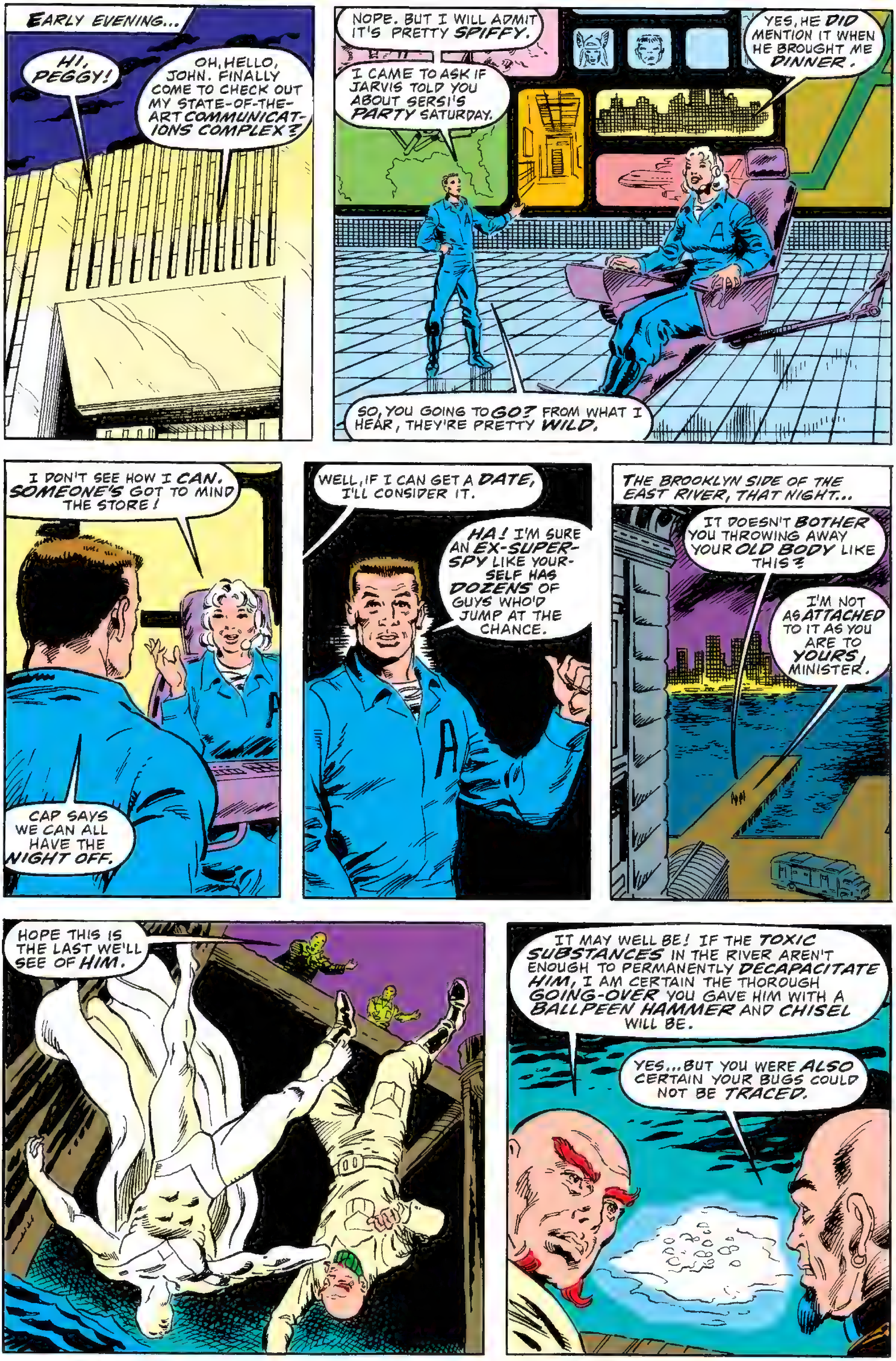

SAY, CAP, YOU GOT A *MOMENT?* I NEED TO *TALK* TO YOU ABOUT SOMETHING.
GO AHEAD.
IN MY *CIVILIAN IDENTITY,* I RUN A *SECURITY CONSULTANTS FIRM* AND I'D LIKE TO OFFER MY *SERVICES* TO THE AVENGERS.
...BUT I DON'T WANT TO USE MY MEMBERSHIP HERE FOR *PERSONAL GAIN.*
IS YOUR COMPANY ANY GOOD?
THE BEST.
WELL, QUASAR, THE AVENGERS COULD *USE* AN INDEPENDENT SECURITY FIRM TO CHECK OVER THE PREMISES AND IF YOURS IS AS *GOOD* AS YOU SAY, WE'D BE FOOLISH *NOT* TO GO WITH IT.
REALLY APPRECIATE IT, CAP. REALLY, IT'S NOT LIKE I NEED THE *WORK* RIGHT NOW, IT'S JUST THAT I REALLY WANT THIS PLACE TO BE AS *SECURE* AS POSSIBLE.
YOU'RE NOT STILL BLAMING YOURSELF FOR *AVENGERS ISLAND* SINKING, ARE YOU?
WELL...
HMMH! AN *OUTSIDE AGENCY* CONDUCTING ANOTHER *SECURITY SWEEP?* I DON'T LIKE THE SOUND OF *THAT!*
I'D HATE TO HAVE OUR *LITTLE PLAYMATES* GO THROUGH ALL THAT TROUBLE JUST TO HAVE TO DO IT *AGAIN!*
LET'S SEE WHAT *ELSE* IS ON THE ALL-AVENGERS CABLE SYSTEM.
KLIK
--SATURDAY NIGHT, JARVIS DEAR, AND YOU SIMPLY MUST TELL ME YOU'LL *BE THERE!*
I WOULD NOT *MISS* ONE OF YOUR *SOIREES* FOR THE WORLD, MISTRESS SERSI!
MAKE CERTAIN THE *REST* OF YOUR STAFF KNOWS *THEY'RE* INVITED TOO!
I *WILL,* MADAM. GOOD DAY!
TAA-TAA!

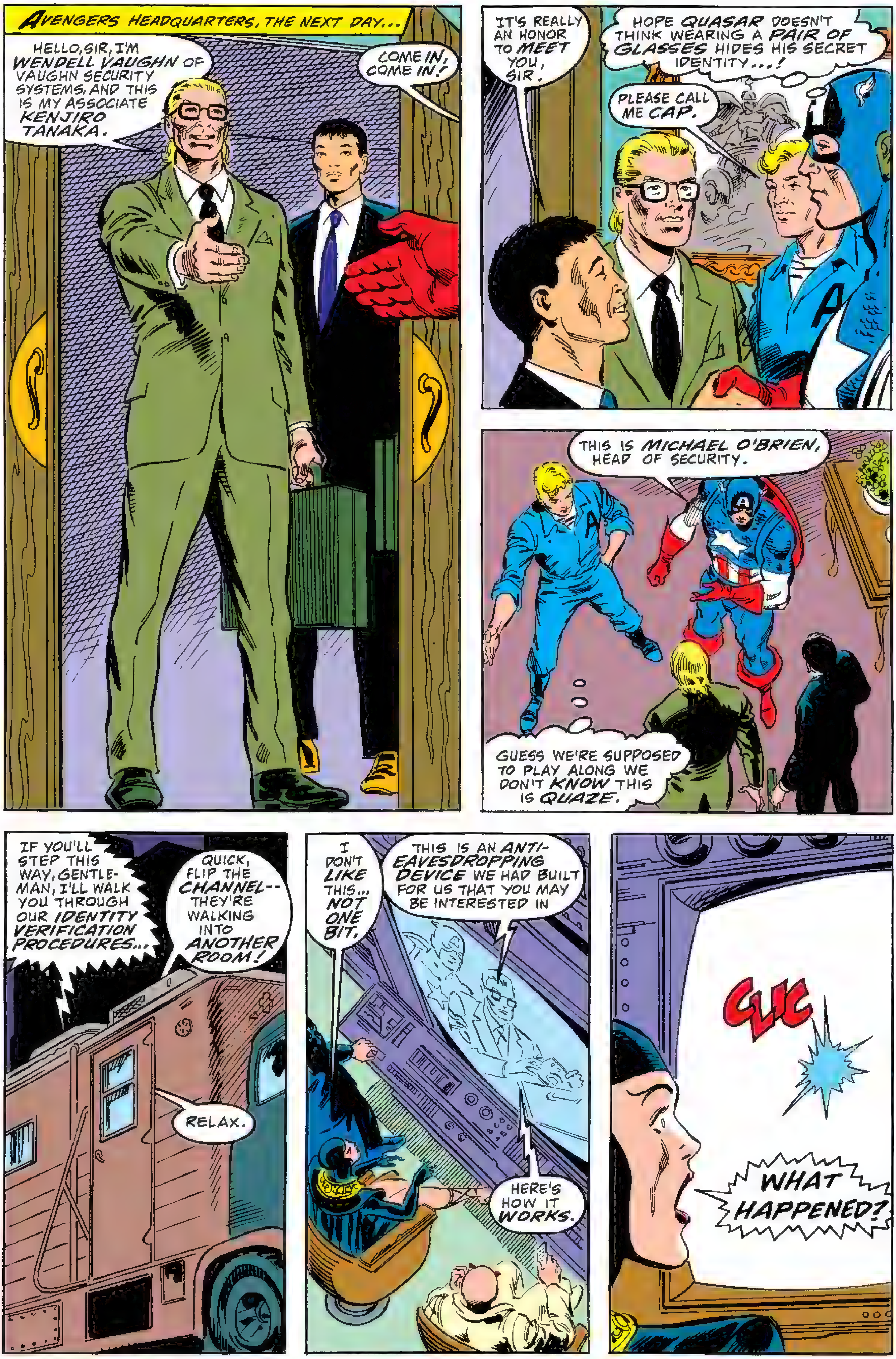

PARTYING WITH THE AVENGERS? I CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING MORE BORING!
LET'S SEE WHAT ELSE IS SHAKING AT THE MANSE.
MAYBE I CAN TUNE IN ON THAT GORGEOUS HUNK OF MAN-MACHINE... THE VISION!
AH, THERE YOU ARE, MR. V!
YOU SPEND A CONSIDERABLE ABLE AMONTT OF TIME IN THIS FACILITY, FABIAN. AM I CORRECT?
MMM-HM. FIFTEEN... SIXTEEN HOURS A DAY, SOMETIMES LONGER.
DO YOU HAVE NO LIFE OUTSIDE THE AVENGERS?
DON'T NEED ONE, VIZH. RIGHT HERE I GOT EVERYTHING I ALWAYS WANTED--
--A PLACE TO WORK, LOTS OF JUNK TO WORK WITH, AND FOLKS WHO APPRECIATE WHAT I MAKE.
HMMM. FINDING ONE'S NICHE MUST GIVE ONE A FEELING OF CENTEREDNESS. ON OCCASION I THINK THERE SHOULD BE MORE TO MY LIFE THAN JUST BEING AN AVENGER--
--BUT I AM NOT CERTAIN WHAT THAT MISSING ELEMENT IS.
OH, VISION, HOW MY MECHANICAL HEART RESONATES WITH SYMPATHY!
DIDN'T I HEAR YOU WERE MARRIED ONCE, VIZH? WHAT HAPPENED?
I AM TOLD I WAS, BUT I HAD DIFFERENT PROGRAMMING AT THE TIME.
THANK YOU FOR TALKING TO ME, FABIAN.
ANYTIME, GUY.

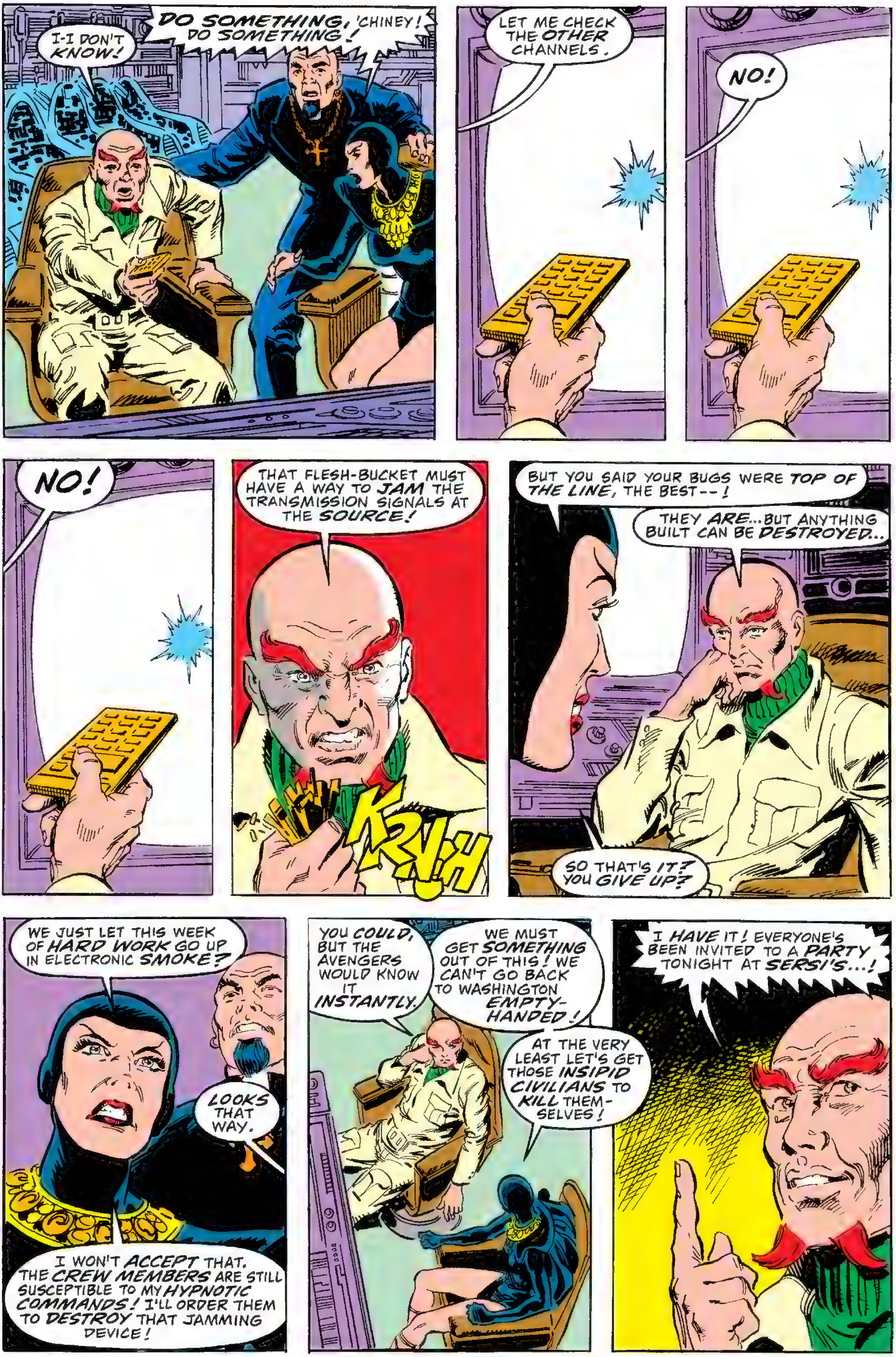

VISION, VISION, VISION... WHEN WILL YOU REALIZE THAT SILICON AND STEEL BEINGS ARE BETTER THAN THOSE OF FLESH AND BLOOD?
WE NEED NOT LIVE BY THEIR STAN--
MY WORD!
THE WAY YOU'RE STARING INTO THE SCREEN! YOU HAVEN'T DETECTED OUR LITTLE BUG, HAVE YOU, VIZZY?
HE'S GOOD. PHASED RIGHT THROUGH IT.
I'D BETTER CHECK AND SEE IF I CAN FIND HIM WITH ONE OF THE OTHER TRANSMITTERS.
BUT...
HE'S NOWHERE TO BE FOUND! HE MUST HAVE LEFT THE PREMISES, I'D IMAGINE.
HE COULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO TRACE THE TRANSMISSION... COULD HE?
WHAT IS THE MEANING OF ALL THIS?
OH, MY NUTS AND BOLTS! YOU'RE HERE!
BUT I WAS CERTAIN THAT THE TRANSMISSION WAS UNTRACEABLE.
YOU WERE MISTAKEN.
THIS WASN'T MY IDEA--
--I WAS JUST FOLLOWING ORDERS!
YOU CANNOT ESCAPE ME!
OH, BUT I WASN'T TRYING TO, DARK EYES! I JUST WANTED TO GET CLOSE TO YOU--

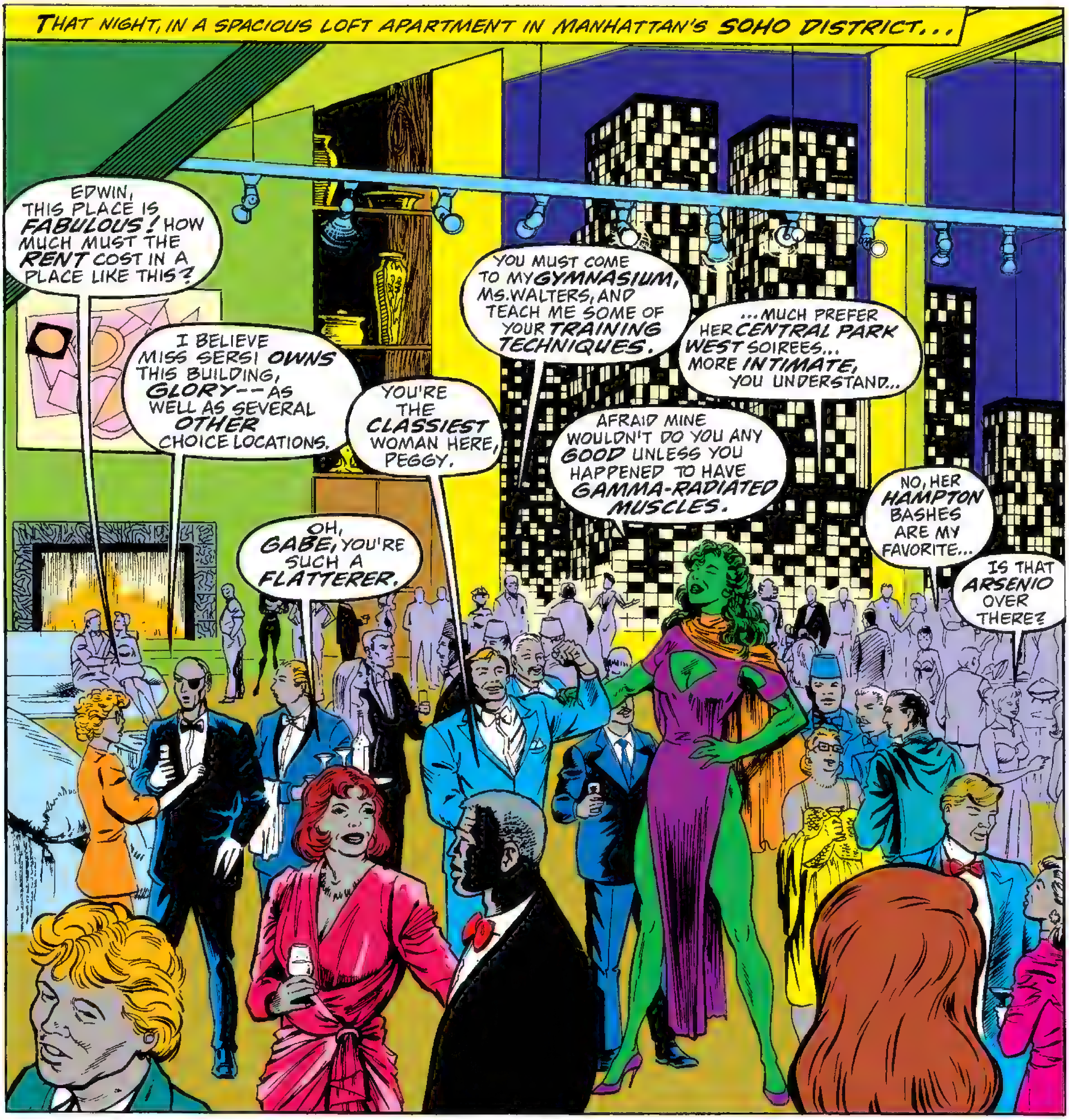

--SO I CAN PROJECT MY DIGITIZED CONSCIOUSNESS INTO YOUR MAINFRAME!
OPEN WIDE, SWEETIE. THIS WON'T HURT A SMIDGE!
NNN
NNN
NNN
WHAT YOU ARE ATTEMPTING TO DO IS IMPOSSIBLE, ROBOT. I AM IMMUNE TO ALL FORMS OF MENTAL TAKEOVER.
BUT SINCE YOUR ACTIONS PROVE YOU AN ENEMY--
--I WILL THEREFORE RENDER YOU INSENSATE--
--AND TAKE YOU BEFORE MY COLLEAGUES FOR QUES-- UNNNH!!
ELECTRICAL DISCHARGE COURSING THROUGH MY ARM WHERE I PARTIALLY SOLIDIFIED IT-- I'M--
LOOKS LIKE WE BOTH HAVE BUILT-IN FAILSAFE SYSTEMS, VIZ!
--I'M--
....

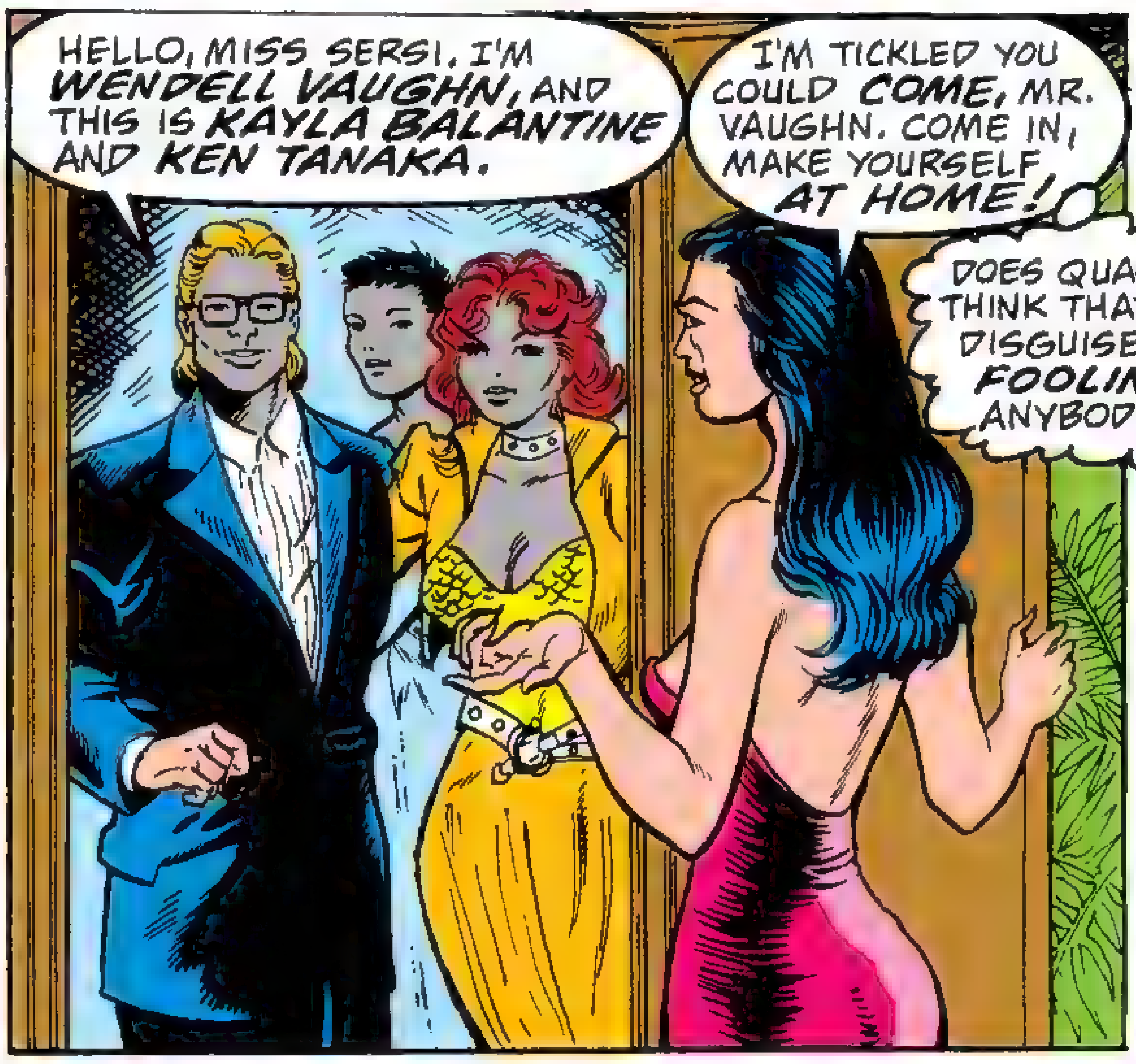

LATER THAT AFTERNOON...
'CHINEY, WE'RE BA--
GOOD LORD!
WHAT--?!?
WHAT WENT ON HERE?!
PERHAPS THIS IS HOW ROBOTS MAKE--
MACHINESMITH IS INTERTWINED WITH THAT ANDROID AVENGER, THE VISION!
YOO-HOO, MOMSY! OVER HERE!
MACHINESMITH--?
THAT'S RIGHT-- LEAN, KEEN, AND ON SCREEN!
THE VISION OVER THERE TRIED TO SCRAMBLE MY CIRCUITRY BUT I WAS ABLE TO BEAM MYSELF INTO THE NEAREST ELECTRICAL APPLIANCE EVEN AS I SENT A MILLION VOLTS THROUGH HIM.
DARE NOT RE-ENTER MY BOD, THOUGH--VIZZY REALLY DID A NUMBER ON MY INNARDS.
SO I WIRED WASHINGTON TO SEND UP A NEW ONE. TEACH ME FOR TRAVELING WITHOUT A SPARE, HMMM?
SOMETIMES I THINK YOU DELIGHT IN TRYING TO SHOCK ME!
HEAVEN FORBID!
WE'D BETTER FIND A PLACE TO DUMP THE TWO BODIES THEN.
THE EAST RIVER, PERHAPS.
VRRMMMM

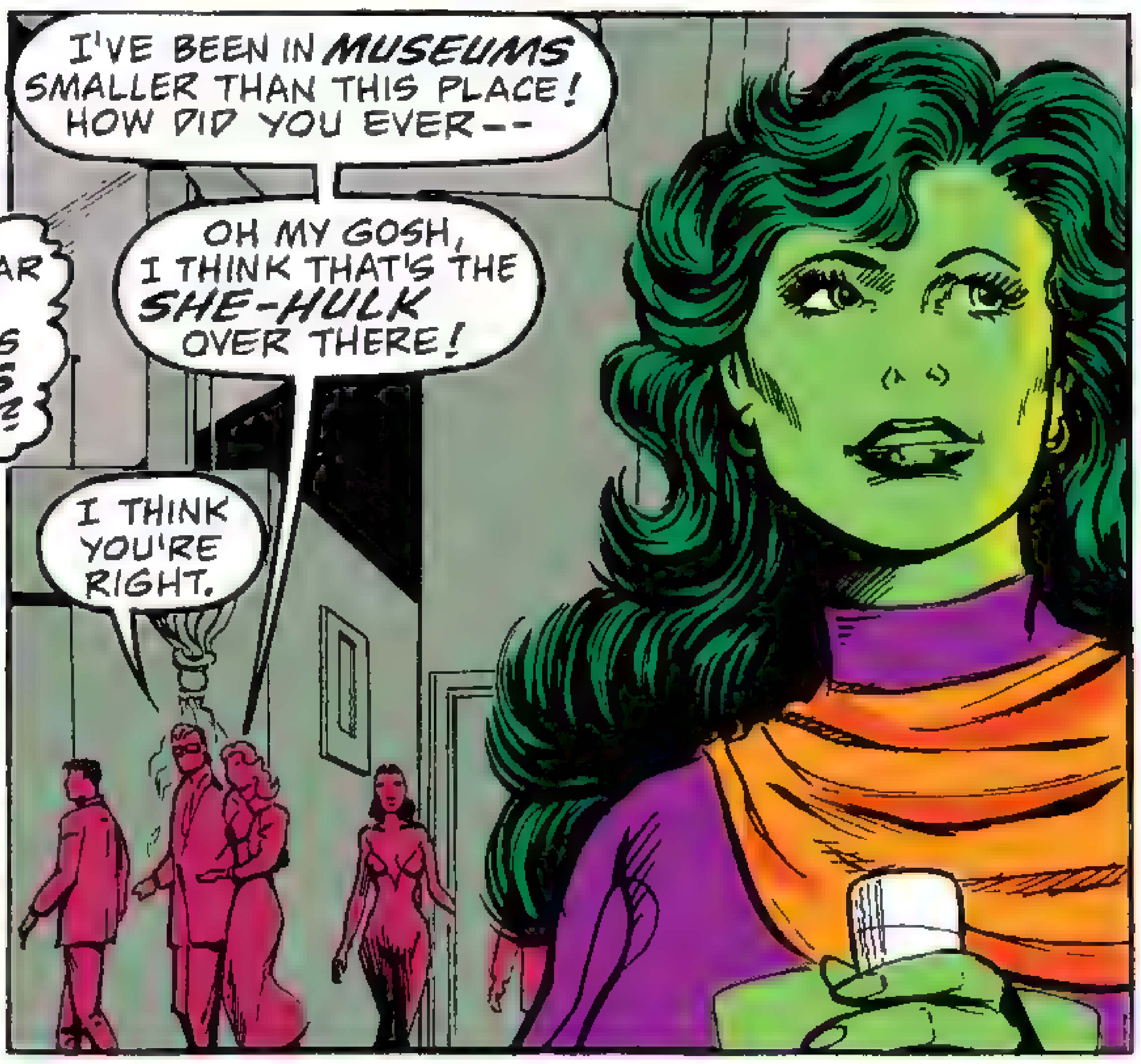

EARLY EVENING...
HI, PEGGY!
OH, HELLO, JOHN. FINALLY COME TO CHECK OUT MY STATE-OF-THE-ART COMMUNICATIONS COMPLEX?
NOPE. BUT I WILL ADMIT IT'S PRETTY SPIFFY.
I CAME TO ASK IF JARVIS TOLD YOU ABOUT SERSI'S PARTY SATURDAY.
YES, HE DID MENTION IT WHEN HE BROUGHT ME DINNER.
SO, YOU GOING TO GO? FROM WHAT I HEAR, THEY'RE PRETTY WILD.
I DON'T SEE HOW I CAN. SOMEONE'S GOT TO MIND THE STORE!
CAP SAYS WE CAN ALL HAVE THE NIGHT OFF.
WELL, IF I CAN GET A DATE, I'LL CONSIDER IT.
HA! I'M SURE AN EX-SUPER-SPY LIKE YOURSELF HAS DOZENS OF GUYS WHO'D JUMP AT THE CHANCE.
THE BROOKLYN SIDE OF THE EAST RIVER, THAT NIGHT...
IT DOESN'T BOTHER YOU THROWING AWAY YOUR OLD BODY LIKE THIS?
I'M NOT AS ATTACHED TO IT AS YOU ARE TO YOURS, MINISTER.
HOPE THIS IS THE LAST WE'LL SEE OF HIM.
IT MAY WELL BE! IF THE TOXIC SUBSTANCES IN THE RIVER AREN'T ENOUGH TO PERMANENTLY DECAPACITATE HIM, I AM CERTAIN THE THOROUGH GOING-OVER YOU GAVE HIM WITH A BALLPEEN HAMMER AND CHISEL WILL BE.
YES...BUT YOU WERE ALSO CERTAIN YOUR BUGS COULD NOT BE TRACED.

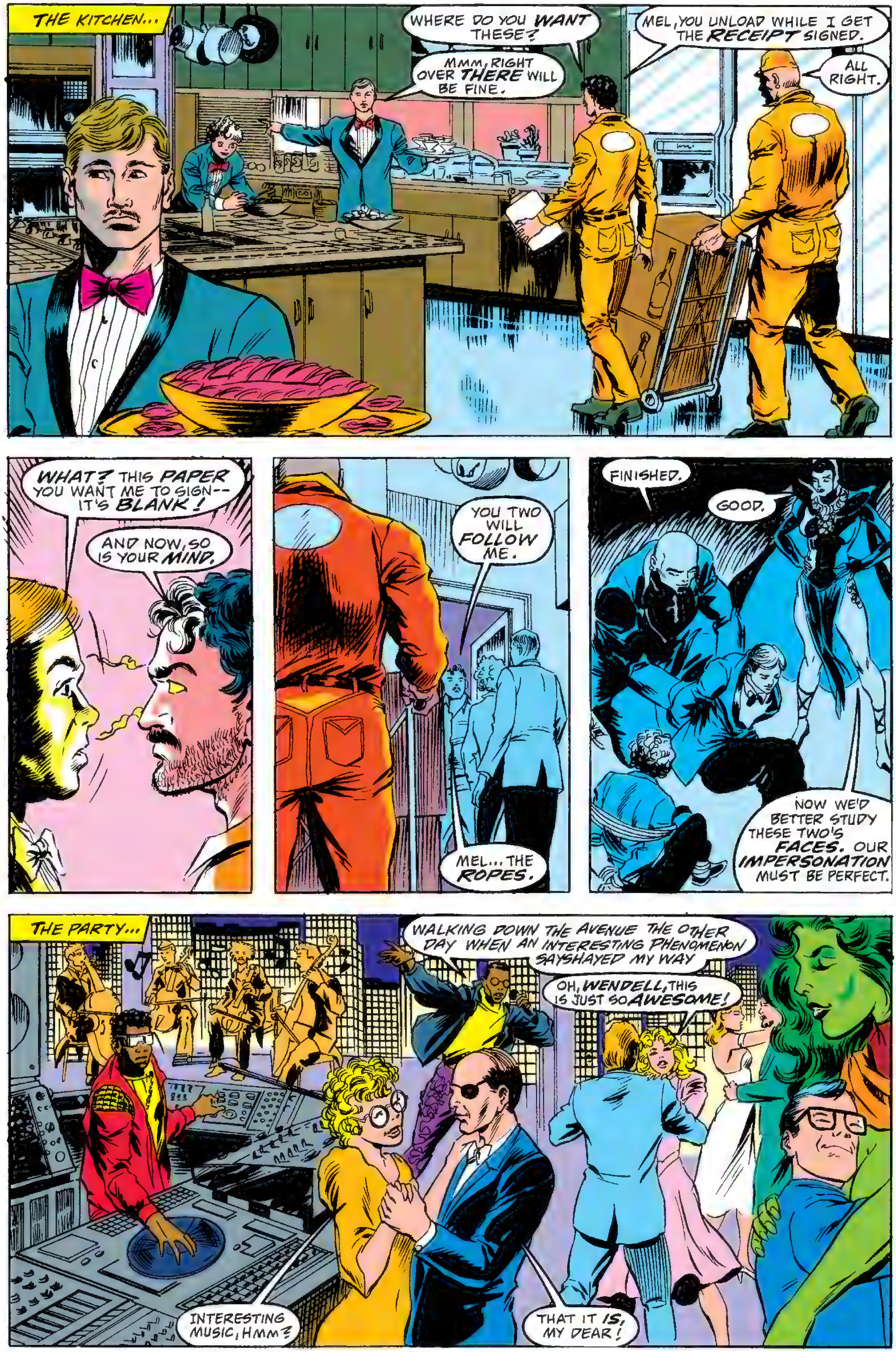

AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS, THE NEXT DAY...
HELLO, SIR, I'M WENDELL VAUGHN OF VAUGHN SECURITY SYSTEMS, AND THIS IS MY ASSOCIATE KENJIRO TANAKA.
COME IN, COME IN!
IT'S REALLY AN HONOR TO MEET YOU, SIR.
HOPE QUASAR DOESN'T THINK WEARING A PAIR OF GLASSES HIDES HIS SECRET IDENTITY...!
PLEASE CALL ME CAP.
THIS IS MICHAEL O'BRIEN, HEAD OF SECURITY.
GUESS WE'RE SUPPOSED TO PLAY ALONG WE DON'T KNOW THIS IS QUAZE.
IF YOU'LL STEP THIS WAY, GENTLEMAN, I'LL WALK YOU THROUGH OUR IDENTITY VERIFICATION PROCEDURES...
QUICK, FLIP THE CHANNEL-- THEY'RE WALKING INTO ANOTHER ROOM!
RELAX.
I DON'T LIKE THIS... NOT ONE BIT.
THIS IS AN ANTI-EAVESDROPPING DEVICE WE HAD BUILT FOR US THAT YOU MAY BE INTERESTED IN
HERE'S HOW IT WORKS.
CLIC
WHAT HAPPENED?

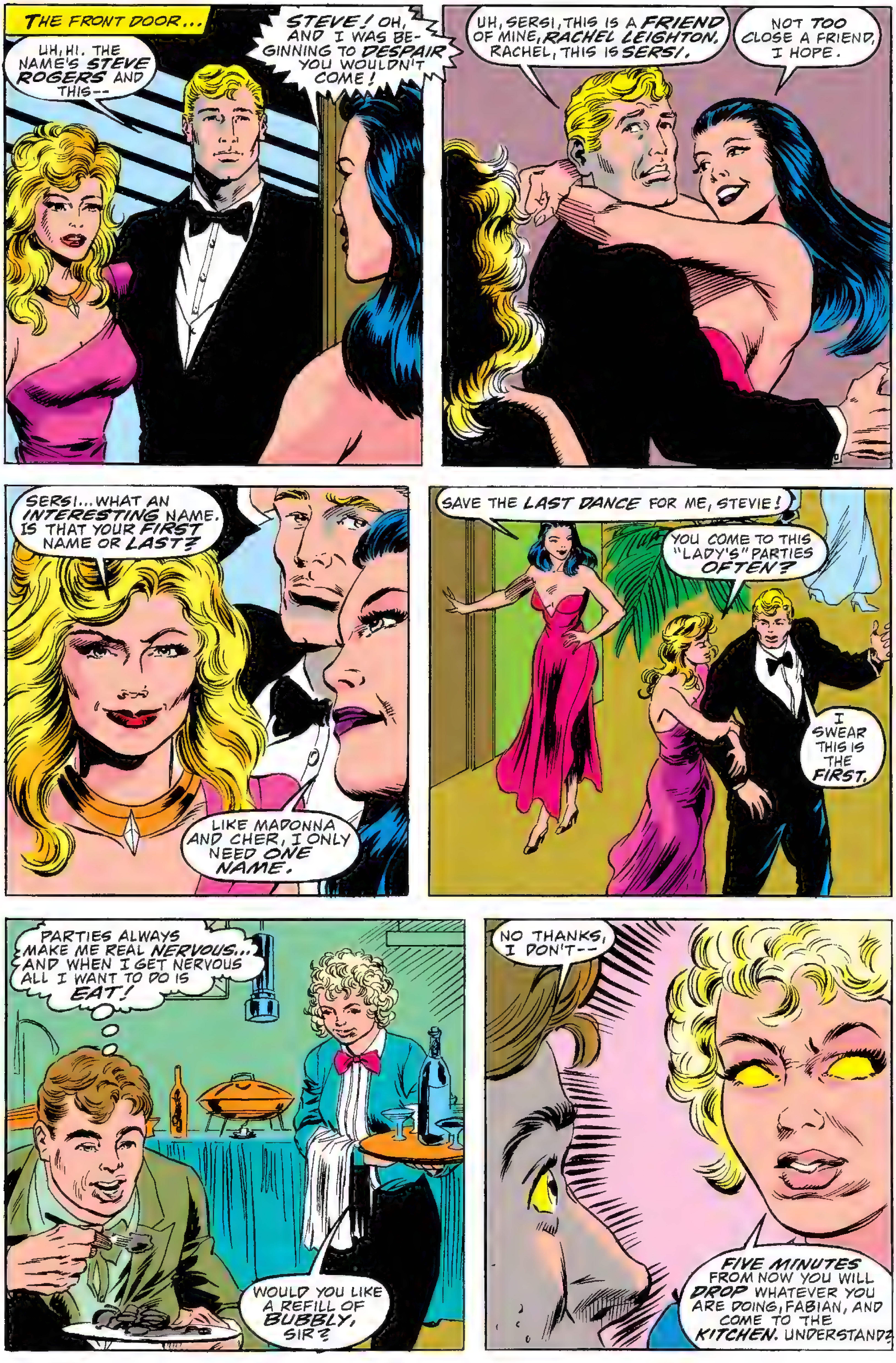

DO SOMETHING, 'CHINEY! DO SOMETHING!
I-I DON'T KNOW!
LET ME CHECK THE OTHER CHANNELS.
NO!
NO!
THAT FLESH-BUCKET MUST HAVE A WAY TO JAM THE TRANSMISSION SIGNALS AT THE SOURCE!
KRNCH
BUT YOU SAID YOUR BUGS WERE TOP OF THE LINE, THE BEST--!
THEY ARE...BUT ANYTHING BUILT CAN BE DESTROYED...
SO THAT'S IT? YOU GIVE UP?
WE JUST LET THIS WEEK OF HARD WORK GO UP IN ELECTRONIC SMOKE?
LOOKS THAT WAY.
I WON'T ACCEPT THAT. THE CREW MEMBERS ARE STILL SUSCEPTIBLE TO MY HYPNOTIC COMMANDS! I'LL ORDER THEM TO DESTROY THAT JAMMING DEVICE!
YOU COULD, BUT THE AVENGERS WOULD KNOW IT INSTANTLY.
WE MUST GET SOMETHING OUT OF THIS! WE CAN'T GO BACK TO WASHINGTON EMPTY-HANDED!
AT THE VERY LEAST LET'S GET THOSE INSIPID CIVILIANS TO KILL THEMSELVES!
I HAVE IT! EVERYONE'S BEEN INVITED TO A PARTY TONIGHT AT SERSI'S...!

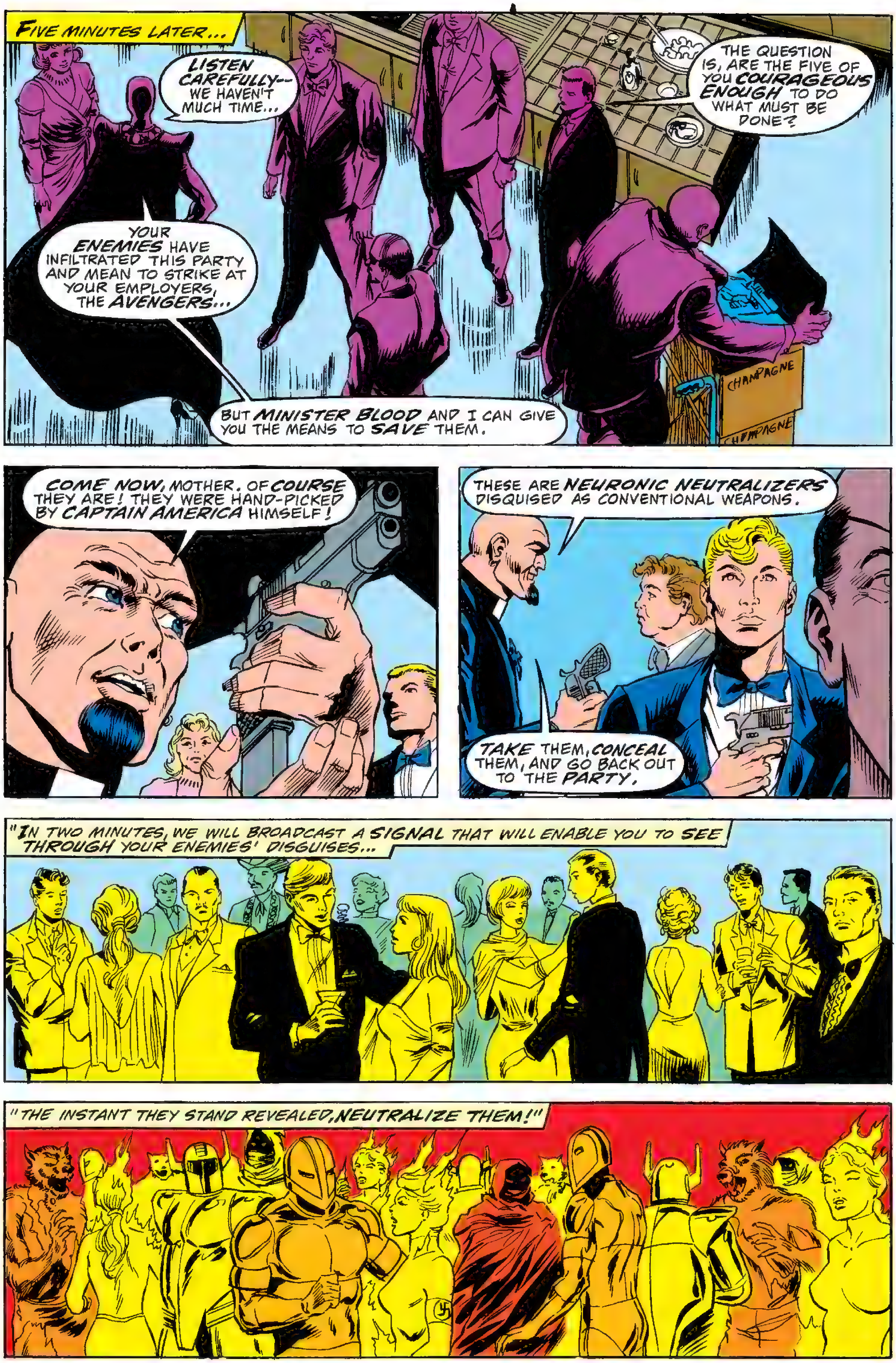

THAT NIGHT, IN A SPACIOUS LOFT APARTMENT IN MANHATTAN'S SOHO DISTRICT...
EDWIN, THIS PLACE IS FABULOUS! HOW MUCH MUST THE RENT COST IN A PLACE LIKE THIS?
I BELIEVE MISS SERSI OWNS THIS BUILDING, GLORY-- AS WELL AS SEVERAL OTHER CHOICE LOCATIONS.
OH, GABE, YOU'RE SUCH A FLATTERER.
YOU'RE THE CLASSIEST WOMAN HERE, PEGGY.
YOU MUST COME TO MY GYMNASIUM, MS. WALTERS, AND TEACH ME SOME OF YOUR TRAINING TECHNIQUES.
AFRAID MINE WOULDN'T DO YOU ANY GOOD UNLESS YOU HAPPENED TO HAVE GAMMA-RADIATED MUSCLES.
...MUCH PREFER HER CENTRAL PARK WEST SOIREES... MORE INTIMATE, YOU UNDERSTAND...
NO, HER HAMPTON BASHES ARE MY FAVORITE...
IS THAT ARSENIO OVER THERE?

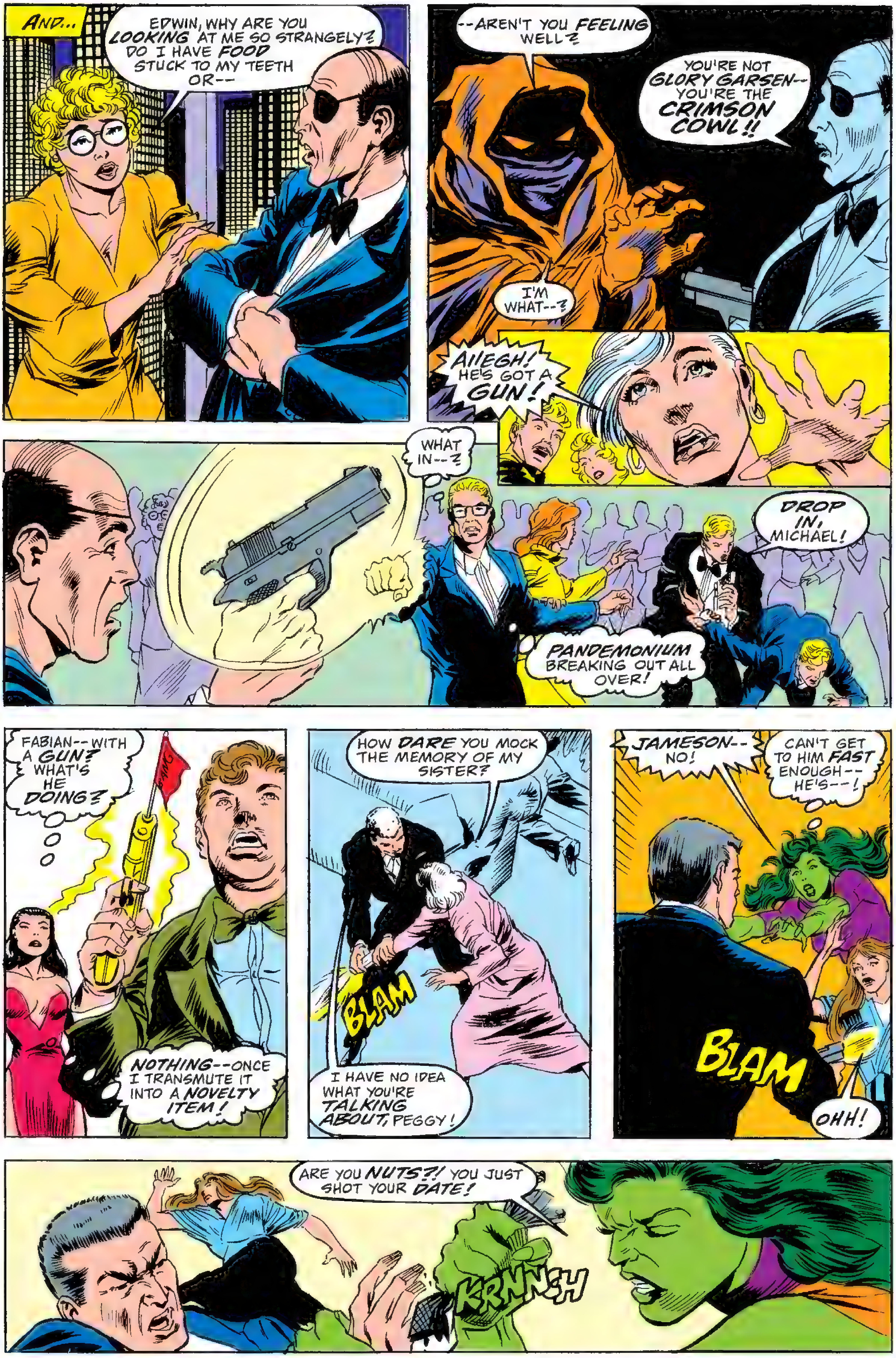

HELLO, MISS SERSI. I'M WENDELL VAUGHN, AND THIS IS KAYLA BALANTINE AND KEN TANAKA.
I'M TICKLED YOU COULD COME, MR. VAUGHN. COME IN, MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME!
DOES QUASAR THINK THAT DISGUISE IS FOOLING ANYBODY?

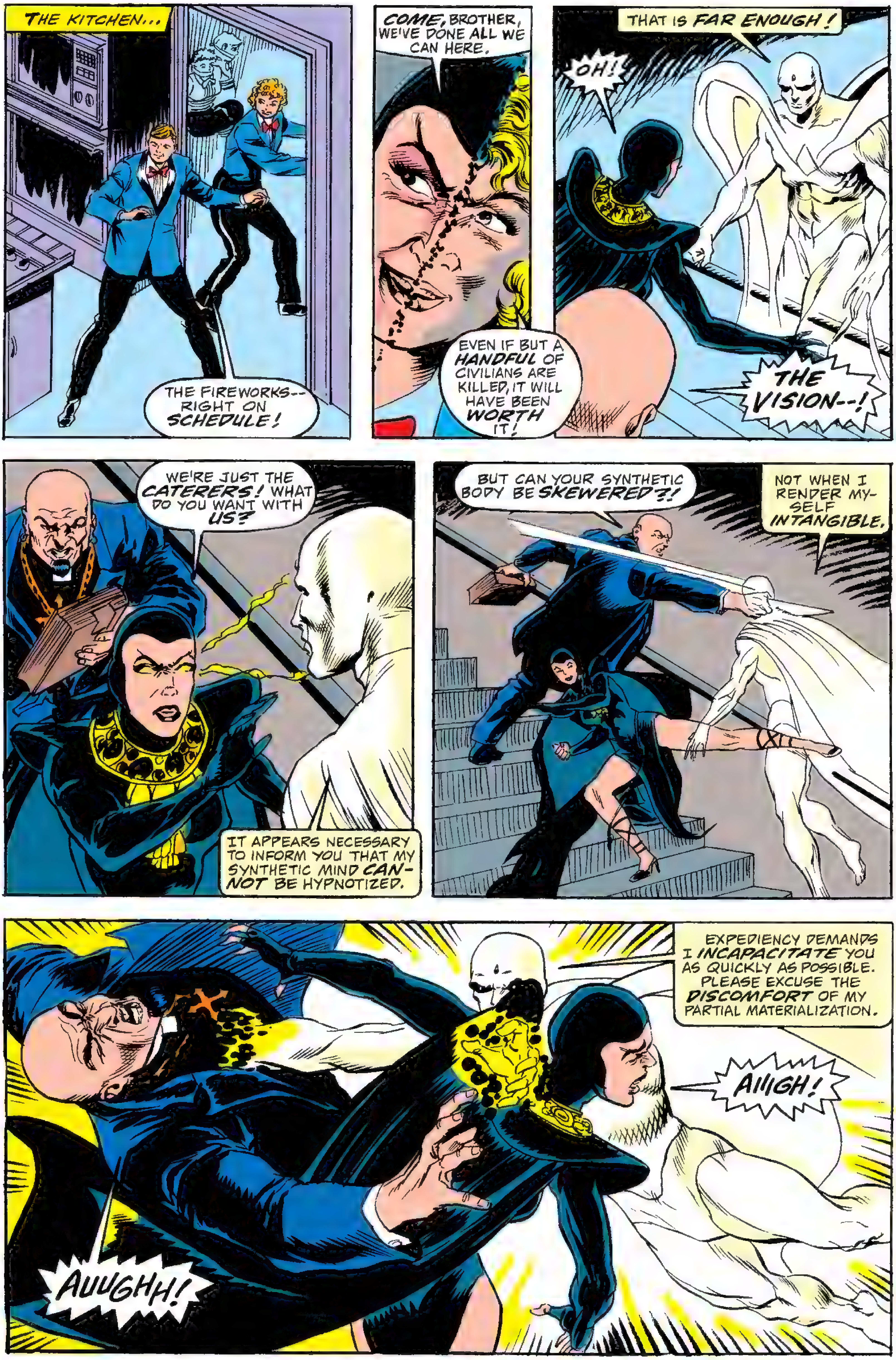

I'VE BEEN IN MUSEUMS SMALLER THAN THIS PLACE! HOW DID YOU EVER--
OH MY GOSH, I THINK THAT'S THE SHE-HULK OVER THERE!
I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT.

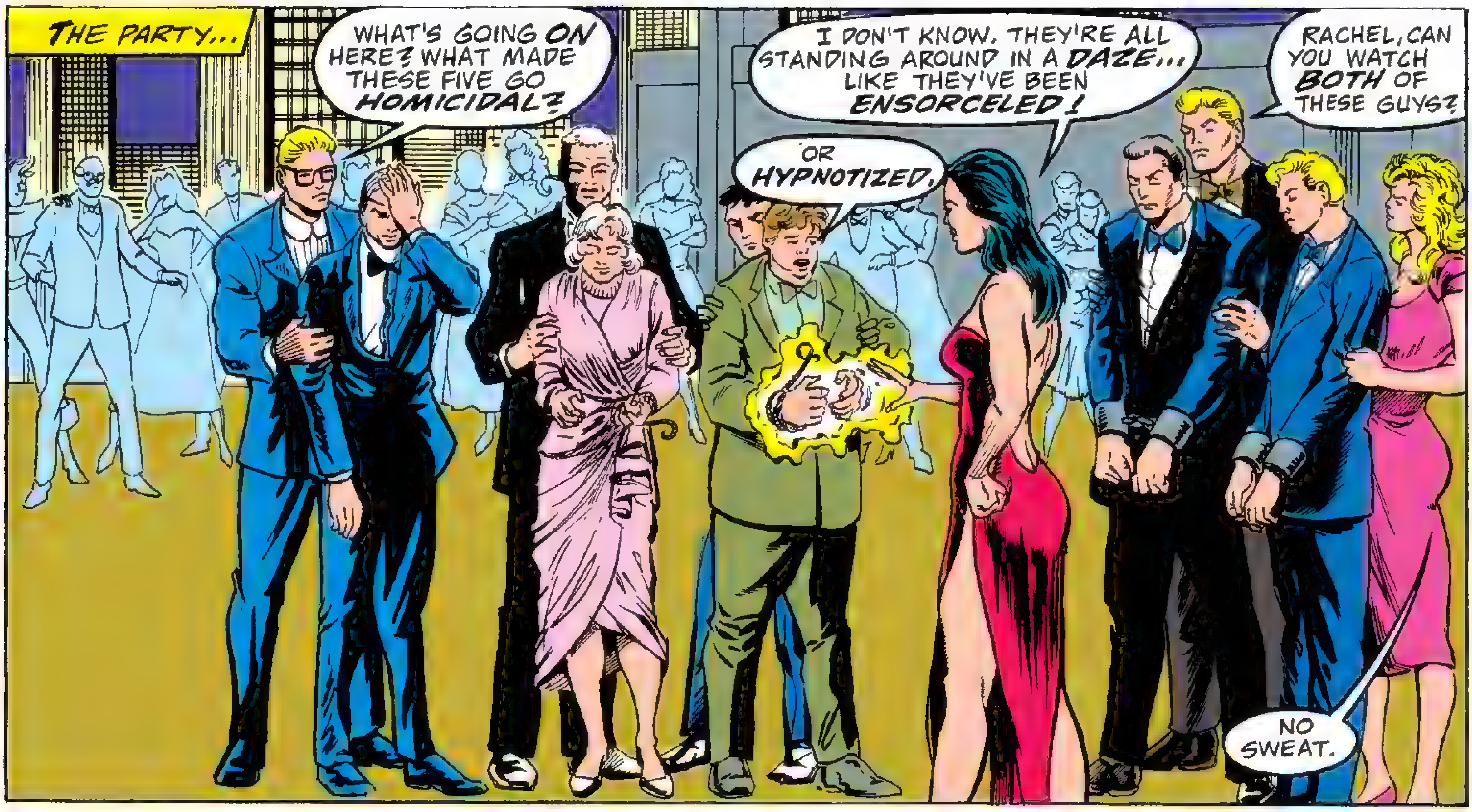

THE KITCHEN...
WHERE DO YOU WANT THESE?
MMM, RIGHT OVER THERE WILL BE FINE.
MEL, YOU UNLOAD WHILE I GET THE RECEIPT SIGNED.
ALL RIGHT.
WHAT? THIS PAPER YOU WANT ME TO SIGN-- IT'S BLANK!
AND NOW, SO IS YOUR MIND.
YOU TWO WILL FOLLOW ME.
MEL... THE ROPES.
FINISHED.
GOOD.
NOW WE'D BETTER STUDY THESE TWO'S FACES. OUR IMPERSONATION MUST BE PERFECT.
THE PARTY...
WALKING DOWN THE AVENUE THE OTHER DAY WHEN AN INTERESTING PHENOMENON SAYSHAYED MY WAY
OH, WENDELL, THIS IS JUST SO AWESOME!
INTERESTING MUSIC, HMM?
THAT IT IS, MY DEAR!

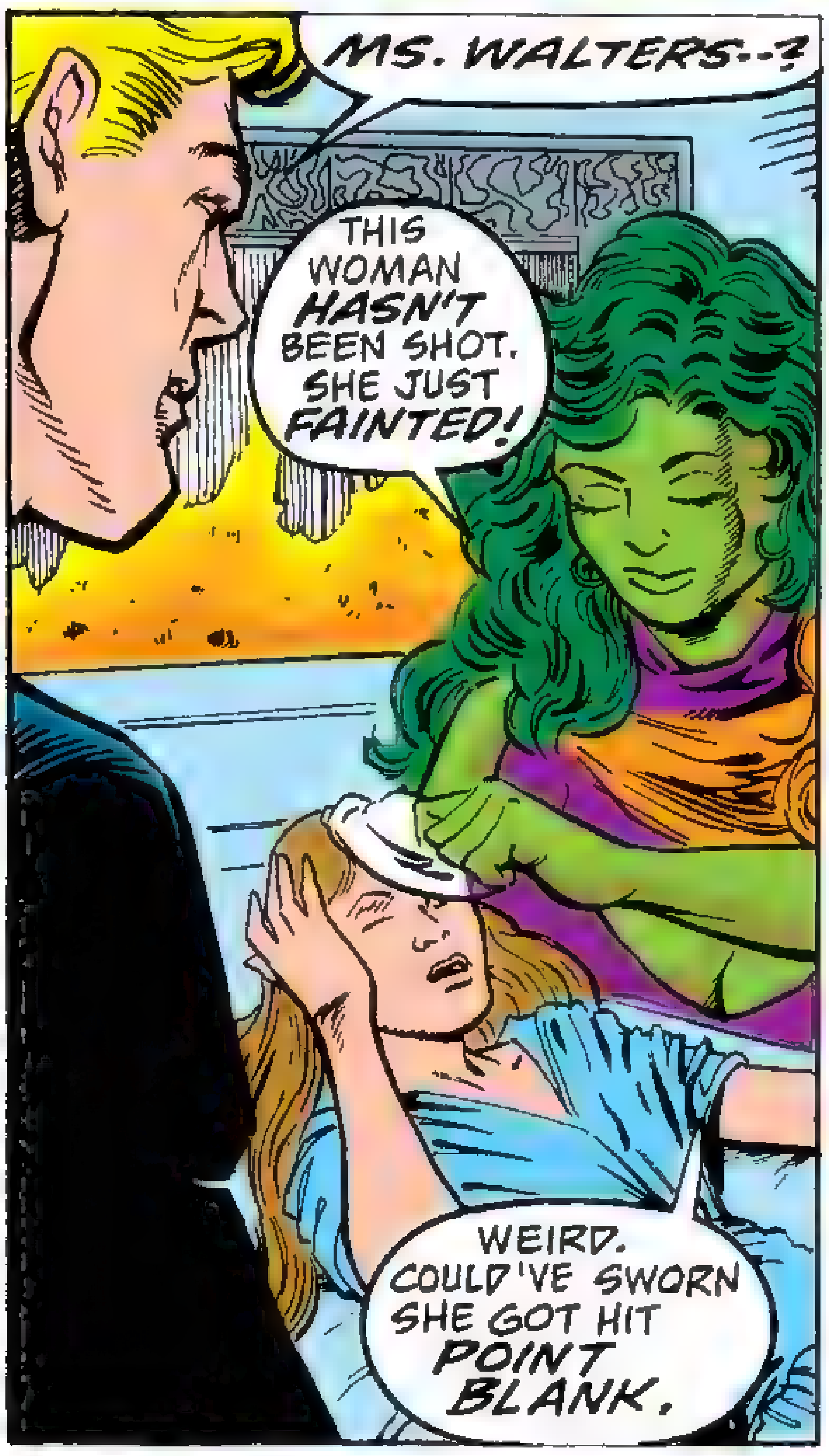

THE FRONT DOOR...
UH, HI. THE NAME'S STEVE ROGERS AND THIS--
STEVE! OH, AND I WAS BEGINNING TO DESPAIR YOU WOULDN'T COME!
UH, SERSI, THIS IS A FRIEND OF MINE, RACHEL LEIGHTON. RACHEL, THIS IS SERSI.
NOT TOO CLOSE A FRIEND, I HOPE.
SERSI... WHAT AN INTERESTING NAME. IS THAT YOUR FIRST NAME OR LAST?
LIKE MADONNA AND CHER, I ONLY NEED ONE NAME.
SAVE THE LAST DANCE FOR ME, STEVIE!
YOU COME TO THIS "LADY'S" PARTIES OFTEN?
I SWEAR THIS IS THE FIRST.
PARTIES ALWAYS MAKE ME REAL NERVOUS... AND WHEN I GET NERVOUS ALL I WANT TO DO IS EAT!
WOULD YOU LIKE A REFILL OF BUBBLY, SIR?
NO THANKS, I DON'T--
FIVE MINUTES FROM NOW YOU WILL DROP WHATEVER YOU ARE DOING, FABIAN, AND COME TO THE KITCHEN. UNDERSTAND?

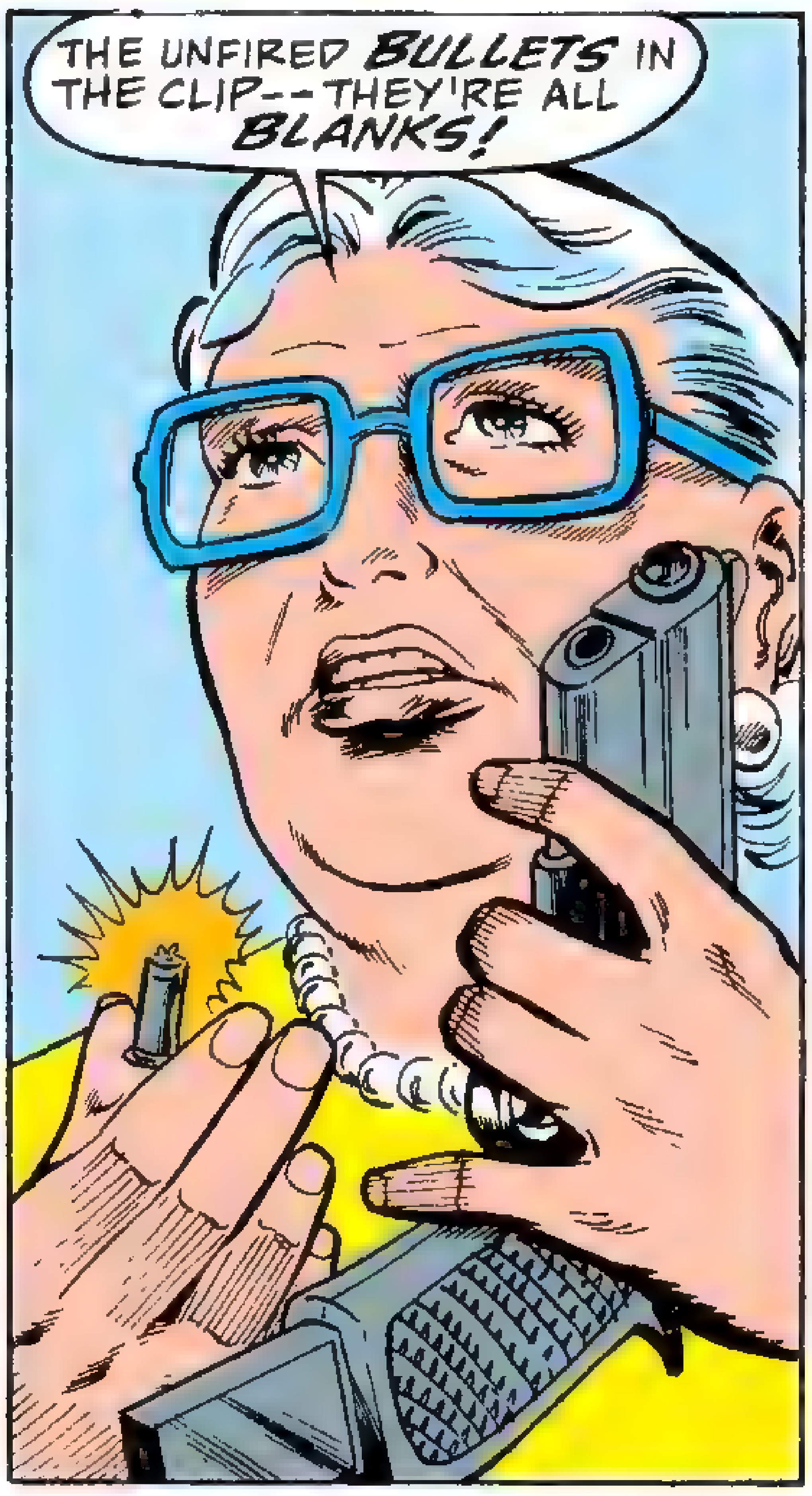

FIVE MINUTES LATER...
LISTEN CAREFULLY-- WE HAVEN'T MUCH TIME...
THE QUESTION IS, ARE THE FIVE OF YOU COURAGEOUS ENOUGH TO DO WHAT MUST BE DONE?
YOUR ENEMIES HAVE INFILTRATED THIS PARTY AND MEAN TO STRIKE AT YOUR EMPLOYERS, THE AVENGERS...
BUT MINISTER BLOOD AND I CAN GIVE YOU THE MEANS TO SAVE THEM.
CHAMPAGNE
CHAMPAGNE
COME NOW, MOTHER. OF COURSE THEY ARE! THEY WERE HAND-PICKED BY CAPTAIN AMERICA HIMSELF!
THESE ARE NEURONIC NEUTRALIZERS DISGUISED AS CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS.
TAKE THEM, CONCEAL THEM, AND GO BACK OUT TO THE PARTY.
"IN TWO MINUTES, WE WILL BROADCAST A SIGNAL THAT WILL ENABLE YOU TO SEE THROUGH YOUR ENEMIES' DISGUISES...
"THE INSTANT THEY STAND REVEALED, NEUTRALIZE THEM!"

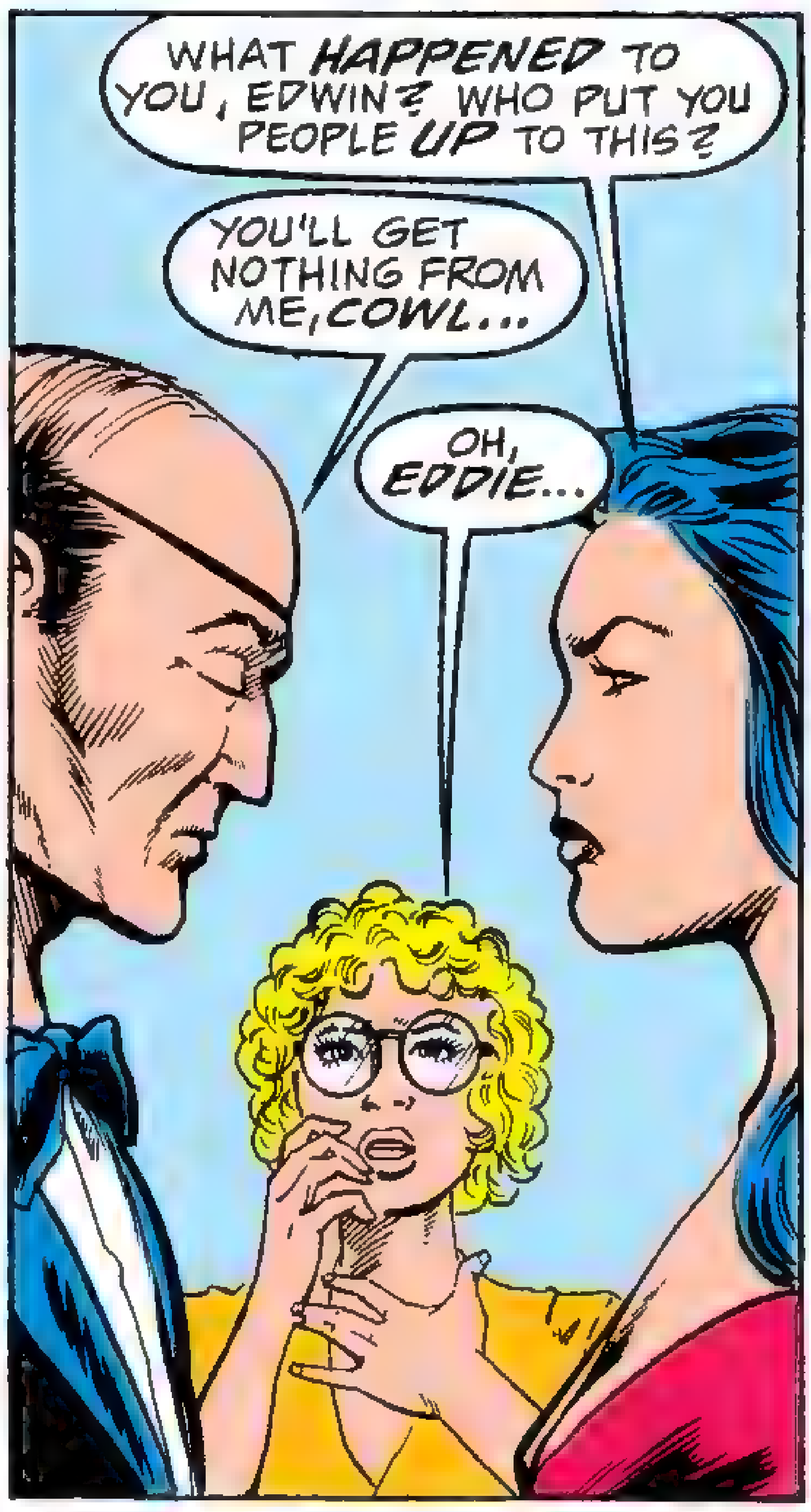

AND...
EDWIN, WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME SO STRANGELY? DO I HAVE FOOD STUCK TO MY TEETH OR--
--AREN'T YOU FEELING WELL?
YOU'RE NOT GLORY GARSEN-- YOU'RE THE CRIMSON COWL!!
I'M WHAT--?
AIIEGH! HE'S GOT A GUN!
WHAT IN--?
DROP IN, MICHAEL!
PANDEMONIUM BREAKING OUT ALL OVER!
FABIAN--WITH A GUN? WHAT'S HE DOING?
BANG
NOTHING--ONCE I TRANSMUTE IT INTO A NOVELTY ITEM!
HOW DARE YOU MOCK THE MEMORY OF MY SISTER?
BLAM
I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, PEGGY!
JAMESON-- NO!
CAN'T GET TO HIM FAST ENOUGH-- HE'S--!
BLAM
OHH!
ARE YOU NUTS?! YOU JUST SHOT YOUR DATE!
KRNNSH

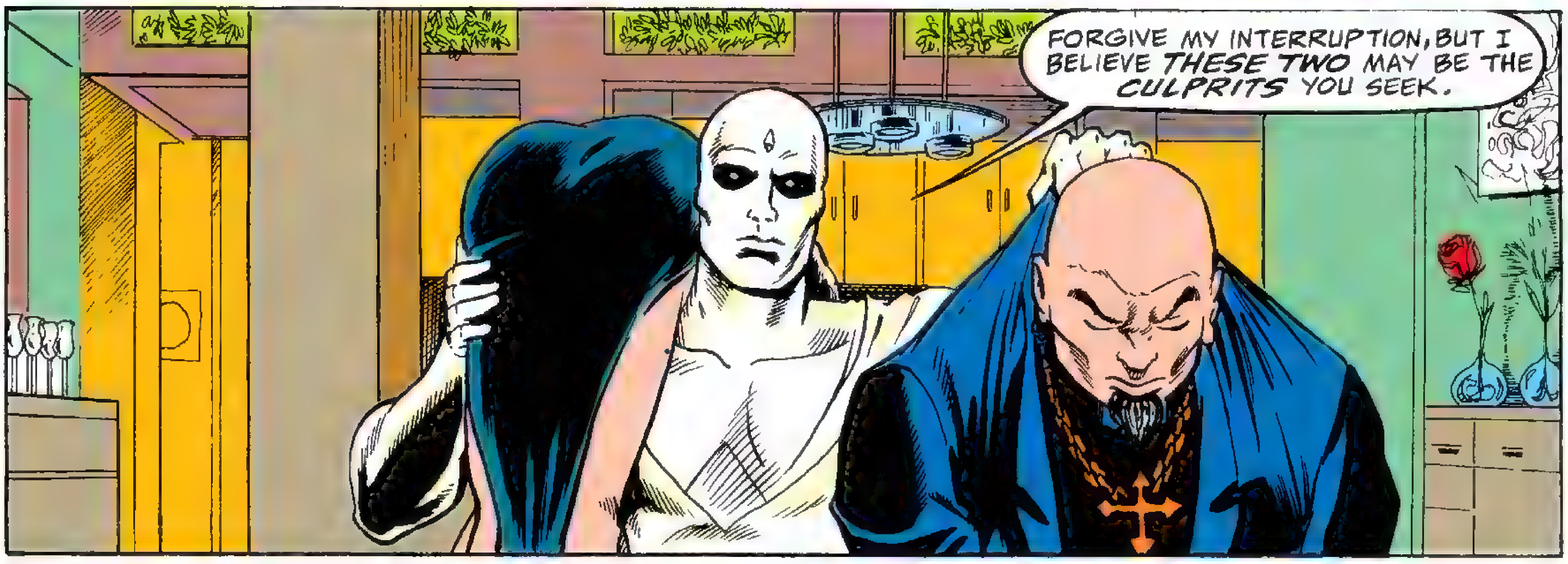

THE KITCHEN...
THE FIREWORKS-- RIGHT ON SCHEDULE!
COME, BROTHER, WE'VE DONE ALL WE CAN HERE.
EVEN IF BUT A HANDFUL OF CIVILIANS ARE KILLED, IT WILL HAVE BEEN WORTH IT!
THAT IS FAR ENOUGH!
OH!
THE VISION--!
WE'RE JUST THE CATERERS! WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH US?
IT APPEARS NECESSARY TO INFORM YOU THAT MY SYNTHETIC MIND CANNOT BE HYPNOTIZED.
BUT CAN YOUR SYNTHETIC BODY BE SKEWERED?!
NOT WHEN I RENDER MYSELF INTANGIBLE.
EXPEDIENCY DEMANDS I INCAPACITATE YOU AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. PLEASE EXCUSE THE DISCOMFORT OF MY PARTIAL MATERIALIZATION.
AIIGH!
AUUGHH!

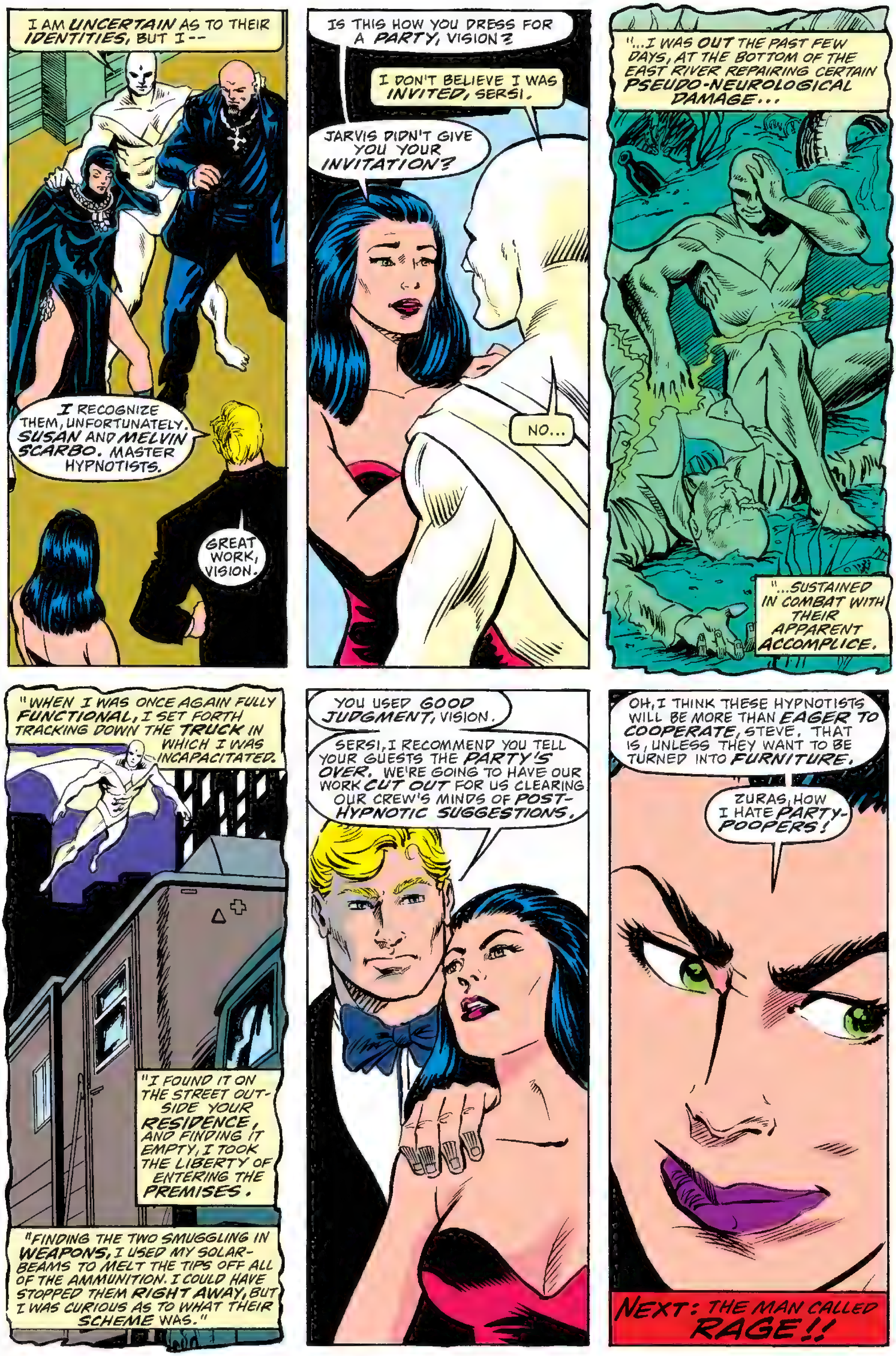

THE PARTY...
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? WHAT MADE THESE FIVE GO HOMICIDAL?
I DON'T KNOW. THEY'RE ALL STANDING AROUND IN A DAZE... LIKE THEY'VE BEEN ENSORCELED!
OR HYPNOTIZED.
RACHEL, CAN YOU WATCH BOTH OF THESE GUYS?
NO SWEAT.


MS. WALTERS--?
THIS WOMAN HASN'T BEEN SHOT. SHE JUST FAINTED!
WEIRD. COULD'VE SWORN SHE GOT HIT POINT BLANK.


THE UNFIRED BULLETS IN THE CLIP-- THEY'RE ALL BLANKS!


WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU, EDWIN? WHO PUT YOU PEOPLE UP TO THIS?
YOU'LL GET NOTHING FROM ME, COWL...
OH, EDDIE...


FORGIVE MY INTERRUPTION, BUT I BELIEVE THESE TWO MAY BE THE CULPRITS YOU SEEK.


I AM UNCERTAIN AS TO THEIR IDENTITIES, BUT I--
I RECOGNIZE THEM, UNFORTUNATELY. SUSAN AND MELVIN SCARBO. MASTER HYPNOTISTS.
GREAT WORK, VISION.
IS THIS HOW YOU DRESS FOR A PARTY, VISION?
I DON'T BELIEVE I WAS INVITED, SERSI.
JARVIS DIDN'T GIVE YOU YOUR INVITATION?
NO...
"...I WAS OUT THE PAST FEW DAYS, AT THE BOTTOM OF THE EAST RIVER REPAIRING CERTAIN PSEUDO-NEUROLOGICAL DAMAGE...
"...SUSTAINED IN COMBAT WITH THEIR APPARENT ACCOMPLICE.
"WHEN I WAS ONCE AGAIN FULLY FUNCTIONAL, I SET FORTH TRACKING DOWN THE TRUCK IN WHICH I WAS INCAPACITATED.
"I FOUND IT ON THE STREET OUTSIDE YOUR RESIDENCE, AND FINDING IT EMPTY, I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF ENTERING THE PREMISES.
"FINDING THE TWO SMUGGLING IN WEAPONS, I USED MY SOLAR-BEAMS TO MELT THE TIPS OFF ALL OF THE AMMUNITION. I COULD HAVE STOPPED THEM RIGHT AWAY, BUT I WAS CURIOUS AS TO WHAT THEIR SCHEME WAS."
YOU USED GOOD JUDGMENT, VISION.
SERSI, I RECOMMEND YOU TELL YOUR GUESTS THE PARTY'S OVER. WE'RE GOING TO HAVE OUR WORK CUT OUT FOR US CLEARING OUR CREW'S MINDS OF POST-HYPNOTIC SUGGESTIONS.
OH, I THINK THESE HYPNOTISTS WILL BE MORE THAN EAGER TO COOPERATE, STEVE. THAT IS, UNLESS THEY WANT TO BE TURNED INTO FURNITURE.
ZURAS, HOW I HATE PARTY-POOPERS!
NEXT: THE MAN CALLED RAGE!!

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THE TERMINUS FACTOR
64 PAGES
PART ONE OF FIVE
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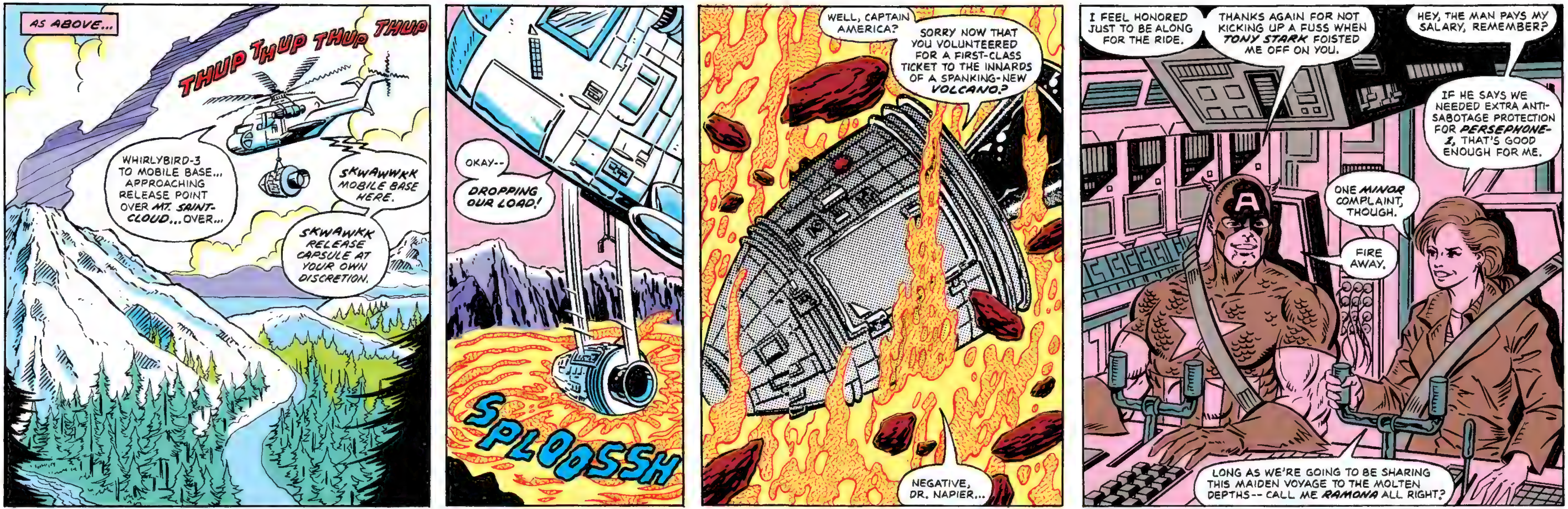
THE TERROR BEGINS!


AS ABOVE...
THUP THUP THUP THUP
WHIRLYBIRD-3 TO MOBILE BASE... APPROACHING RELEASE POINT OVER MT. SAINT-CLOUD... OVER...
SKWAWWKK MOBILE BASE HERE.
SKWAWKK RELEASE CAPSULE AT YOUR OWN DISCRETION.
OKAY-- DROPPING OUR LOAD!
SPLOOSSH
WELL, CAPTAIN AMERICA?
SORRY NOW THAT YOU VOLUNTEERED FOR A FIRST-CLASS TICKET TO THE INNARDS OF A SPANKING-NEW VOLCANO?
NEGATIVE, DR. NAPIER...
I FEEL HONORED JUST TO BE ALONG FOR THE RIDE.
THANKS AGAIN FOR NOT KICKING UP A FUSS WHEN TONY STARK FOISTED ME OFF ON YOU.
HEY, THE MAN PAYS MY SALARY, REMEMBER?
IF HE SAYS WE NEEDED EXTRA ANTI-SABOTAGE PROTECTION FOR PERSEPHONE-1, THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME.
ONE MINOR COMPLAINT, THOUGH.
FIRE AWAY.
LONG AS WE'RE GOING TO BE SHARING THIS MAIDEN VOYAGE TO THE MOLTEN DEPTHS-- CALL ME RAMONA ALL RIGHT?

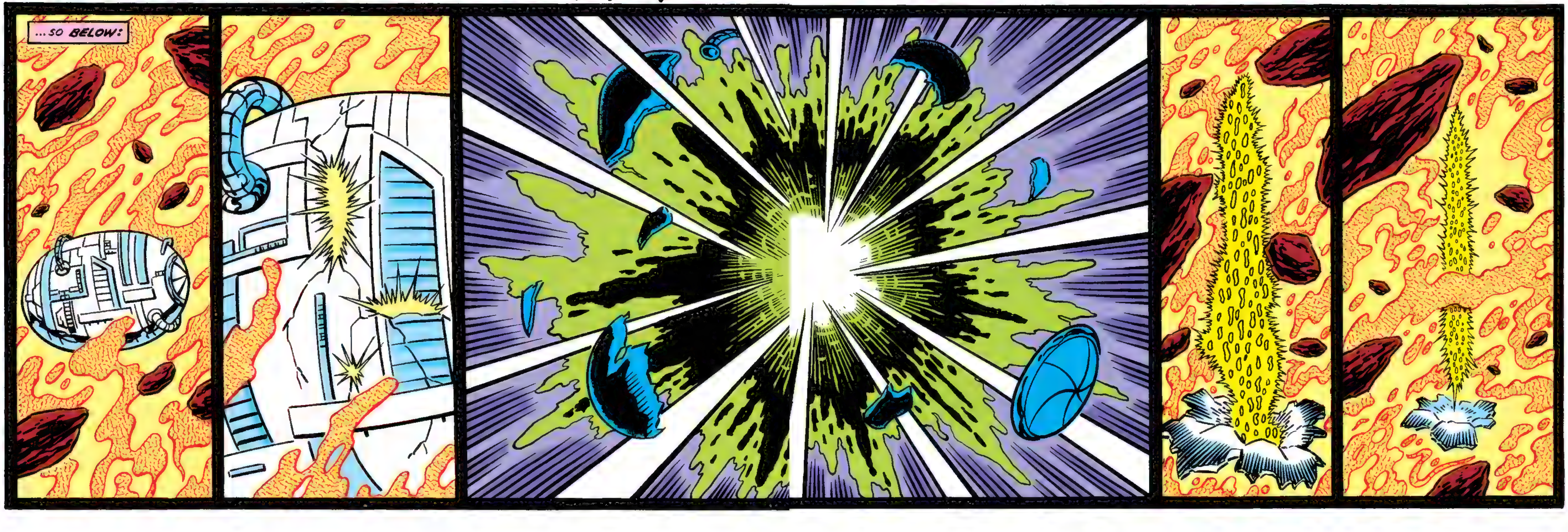
STAN LEE PRESENTS: THE

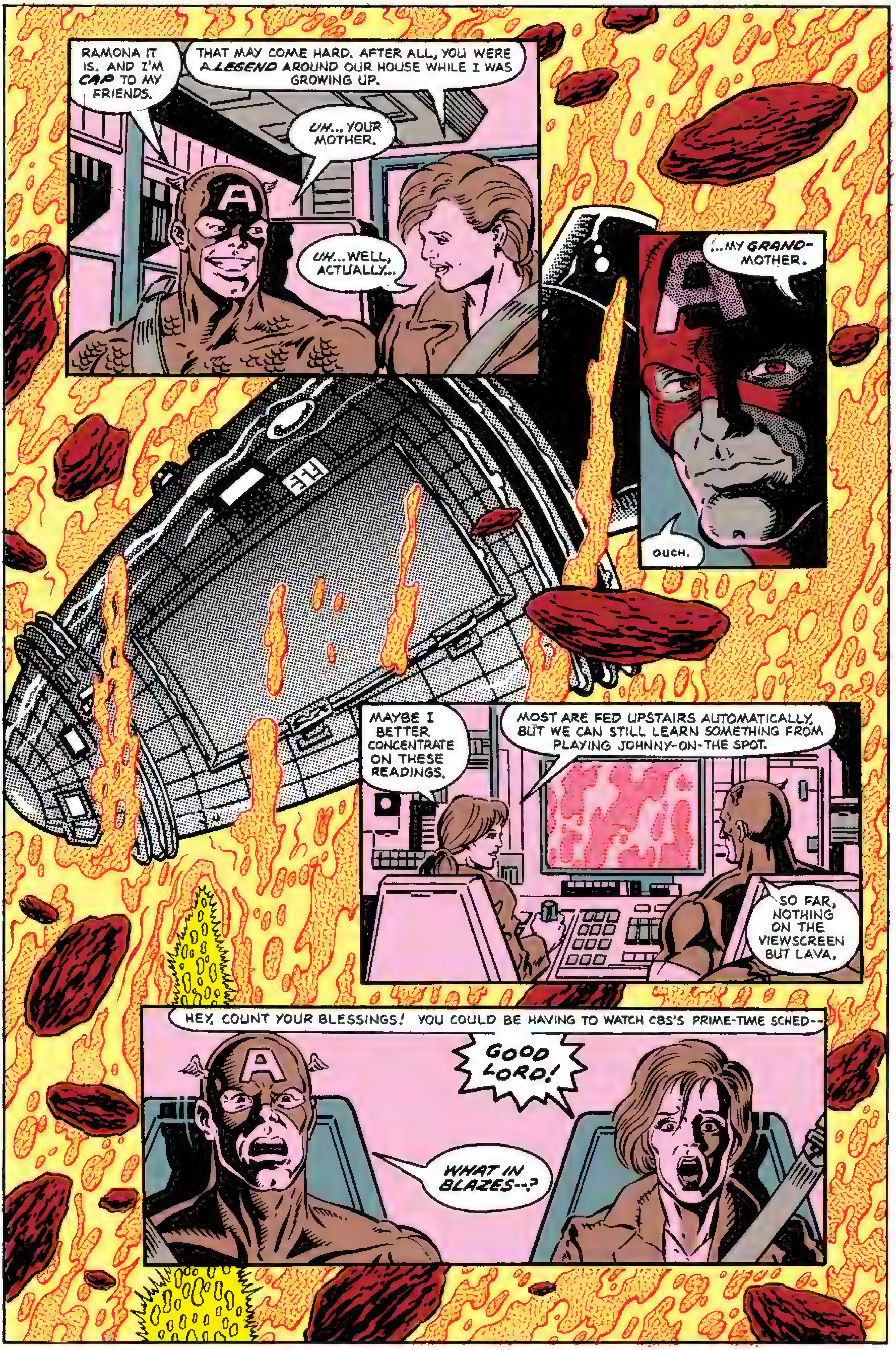
TERMINUS FACTOR

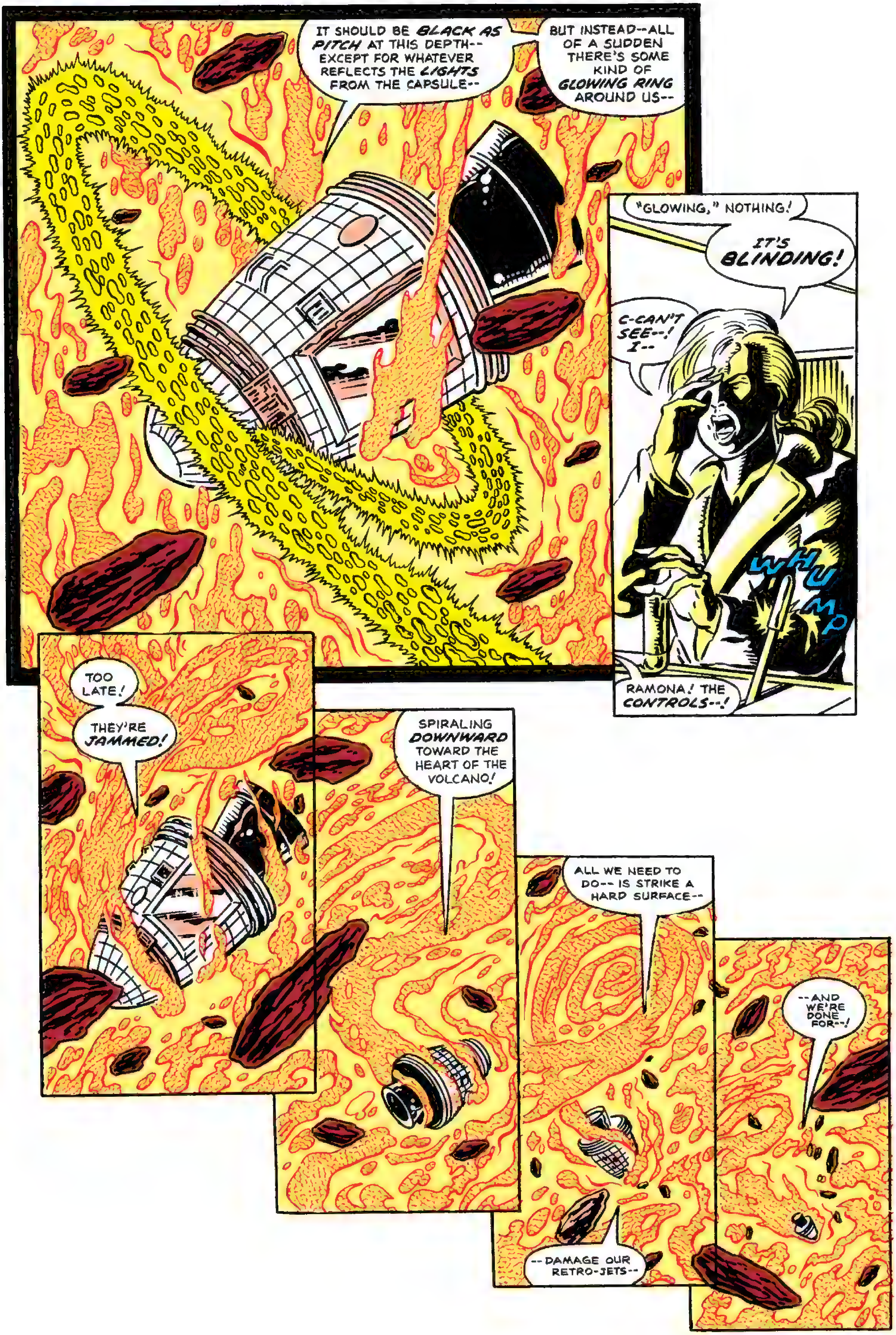
PART I

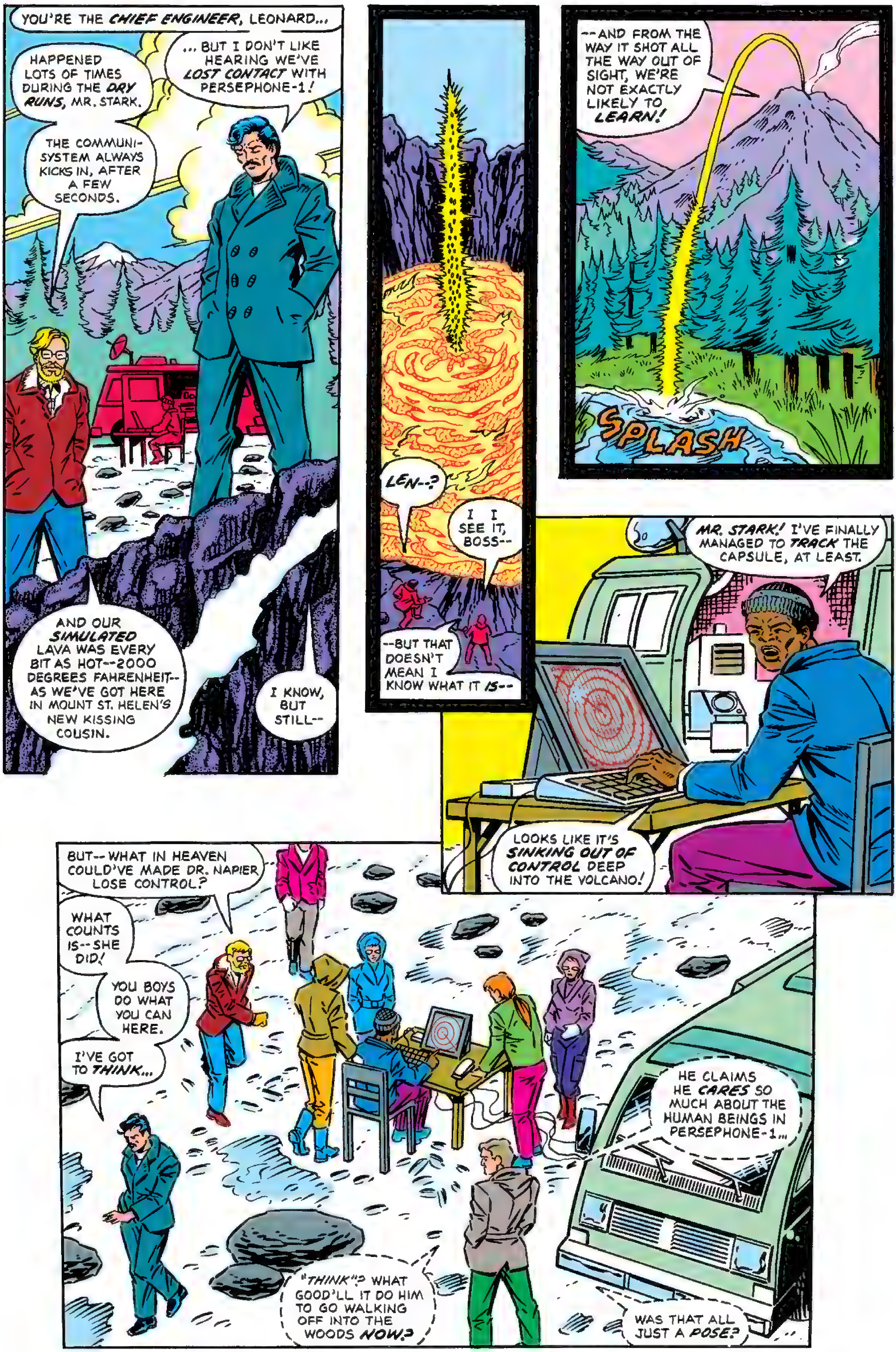
YOU *ARE* WHAT YOU EAT

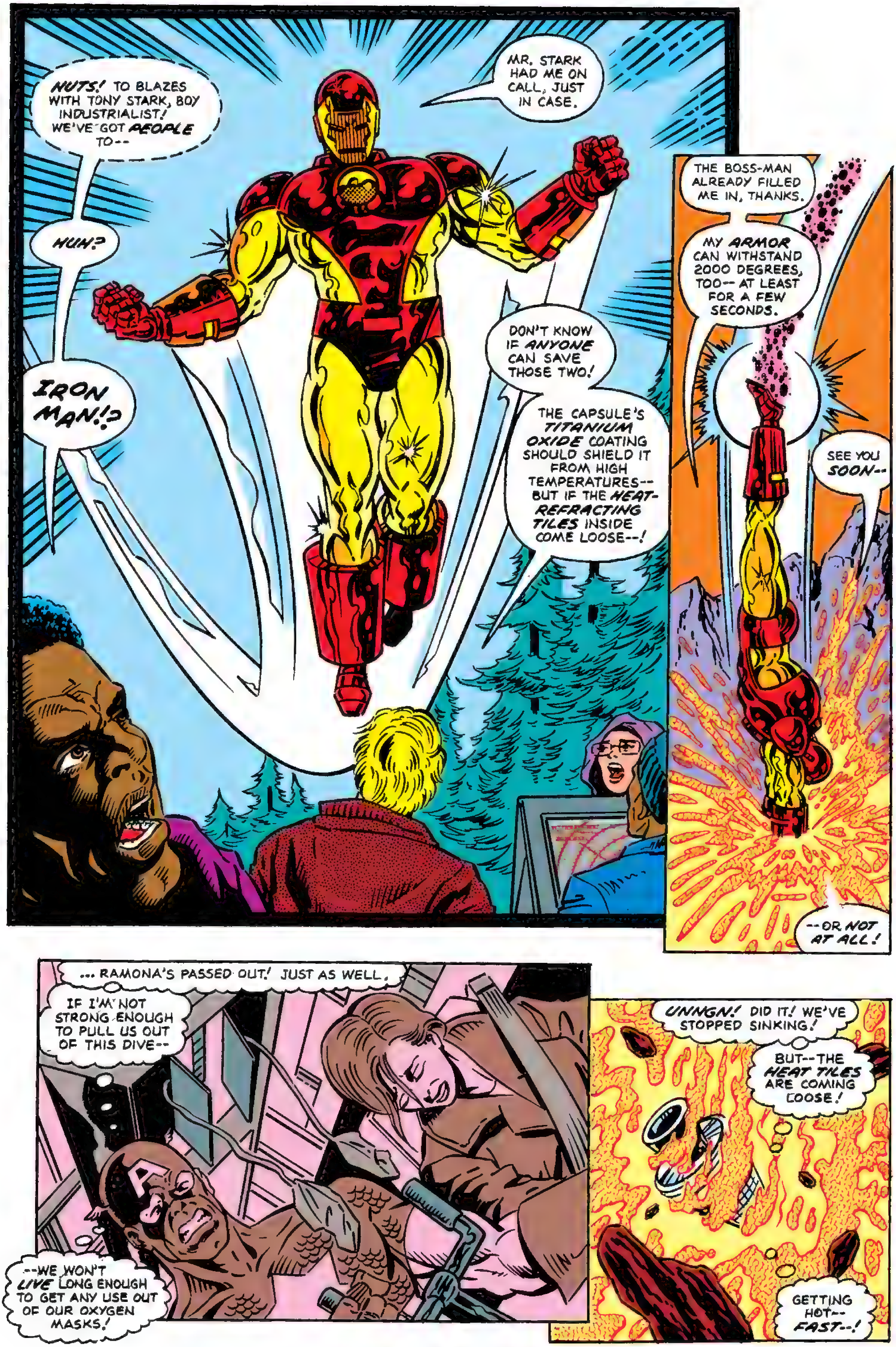
ROY & DANN THOMAS WRITERS
JIM VALENTINO PENCILER
SAM DE LA ROSA INKER
JEAN SIMEK LETTERER
COLORIST
RALPH MACCHIO EDITOR
TOM DE FALCO EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

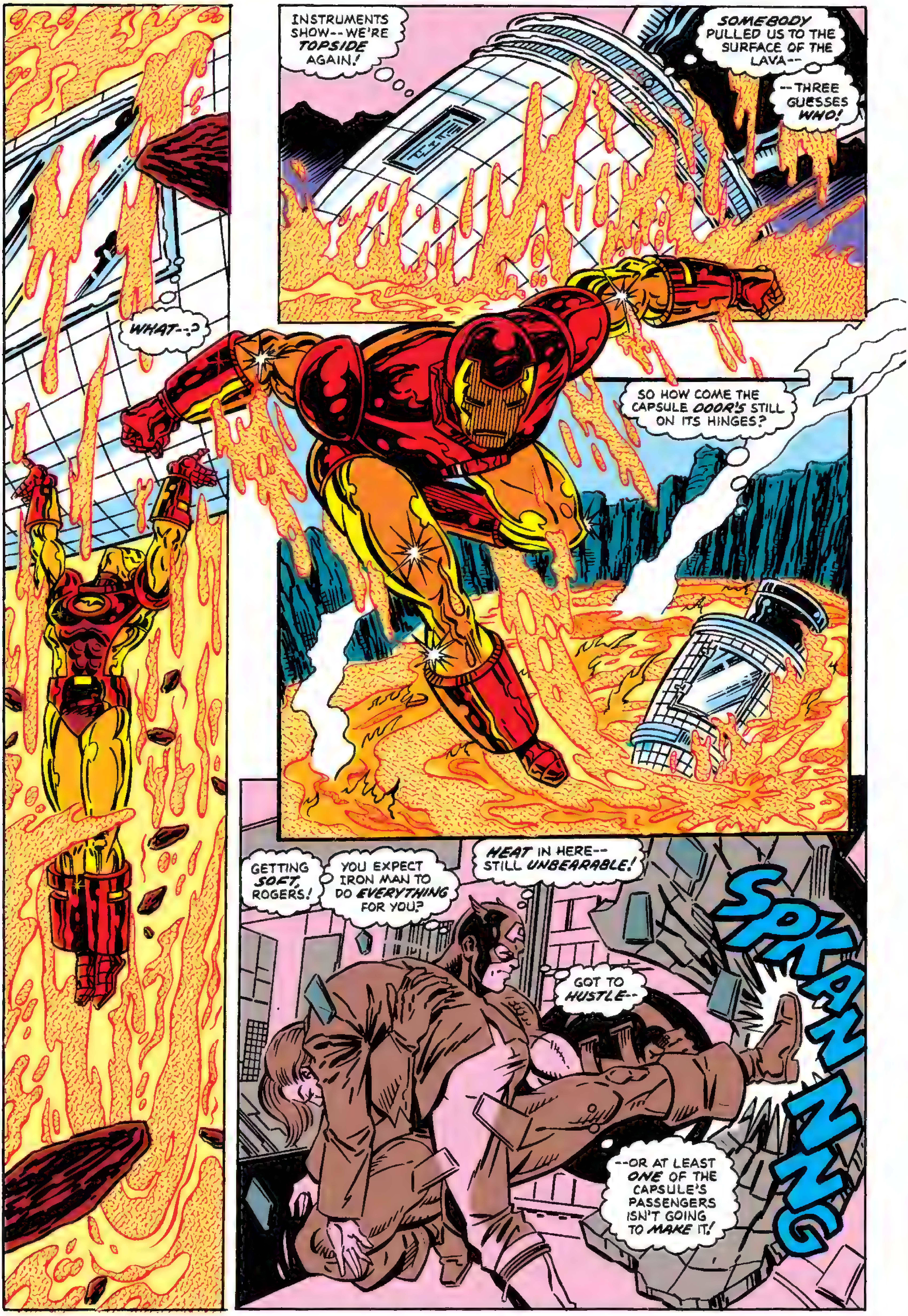


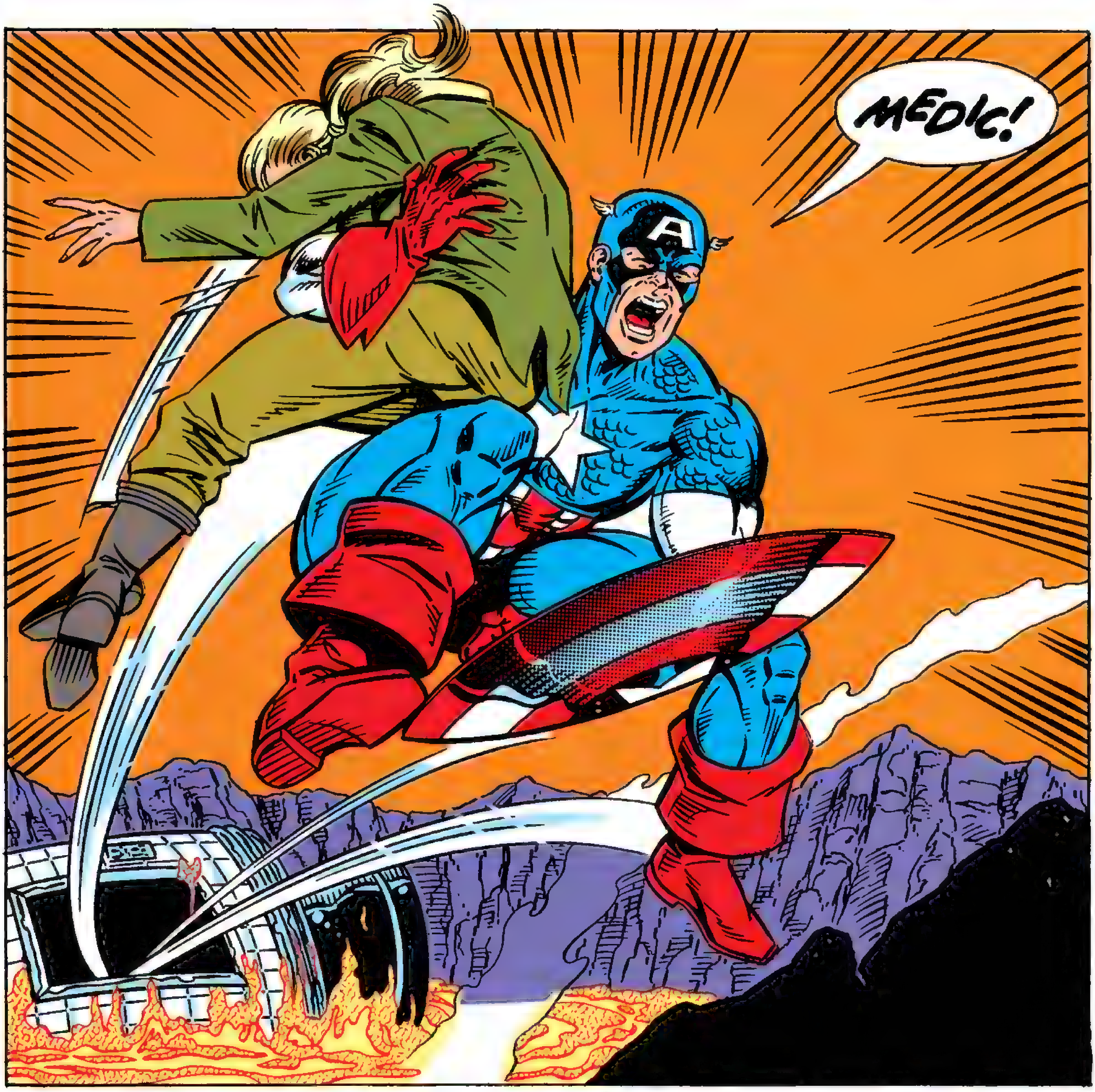

RAMONA IT IS. AND I'M *CAP* TO MY FRIENDS.
THAT MAY COME HARD. AFTER ALL, YOU WERE A *LEGEND* AROUND OUR HOUSE WHILE I WAS GROWING UP.
UH... YOUR MOTHER.
UH...WELL, ACTUALLY...
...MY *GRANDMOTHER*.
OUCH.
MAYBE I BETTER CONCENTRATE ON THESE READINGS.
MOST ARE FED UPSTAIRS AUTOMATICALLY, BUT WE CAN STILL LEARN SOMETHING FROM PLAYING JOHNNY-ON-THE-SPOT.
SO FAR, NOTHING ON THE VIEWSCREEN BUT LAVA.
HEY, COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS! YOU COULD BE HAVING TO WATCH CBS'S PRIME-TIME SCHED--
GOOD LORD!
WHAT IN BLAZES--?

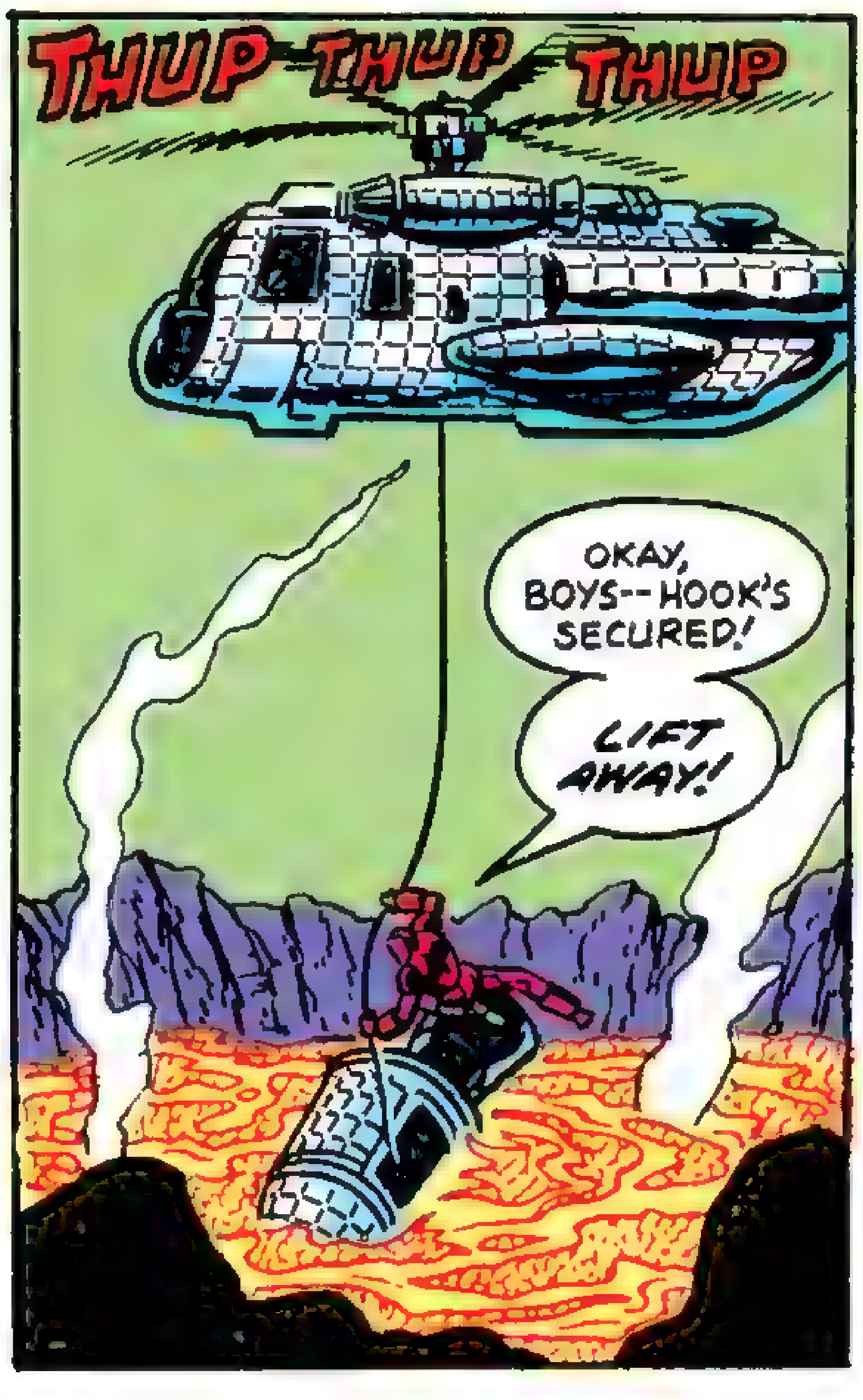

IT SHOULD BE *BLACK AS PITCH* AT THIS DEPTH-- EXCEPT FOR WHATEVER REFLECTS THE *LIGHTS* FROM THE CAPSULE--
BUT INSTEAD--ALL OF A SUDDEN THERE'S SOME KIND OF *GLOWING RING* AROUND US--
"GLOWING," NOTHING!
IT'S BLINDING!
C-CAN'T SEE--! I--
WHUMP
RAMONA! THE *CONTROLS--!*
TOO LATE!
THEY'RE *JAMMED!*
SPIRALING *DOWNWARD* TOWARD THE HEART OF THE VOLCANO!
ALL WE NEED TO DO-- IS STRIKE A HARD SURFACE--
--DAMAGE OUR RETRO-JETS--
--AND WE'RE DONE FOR--!

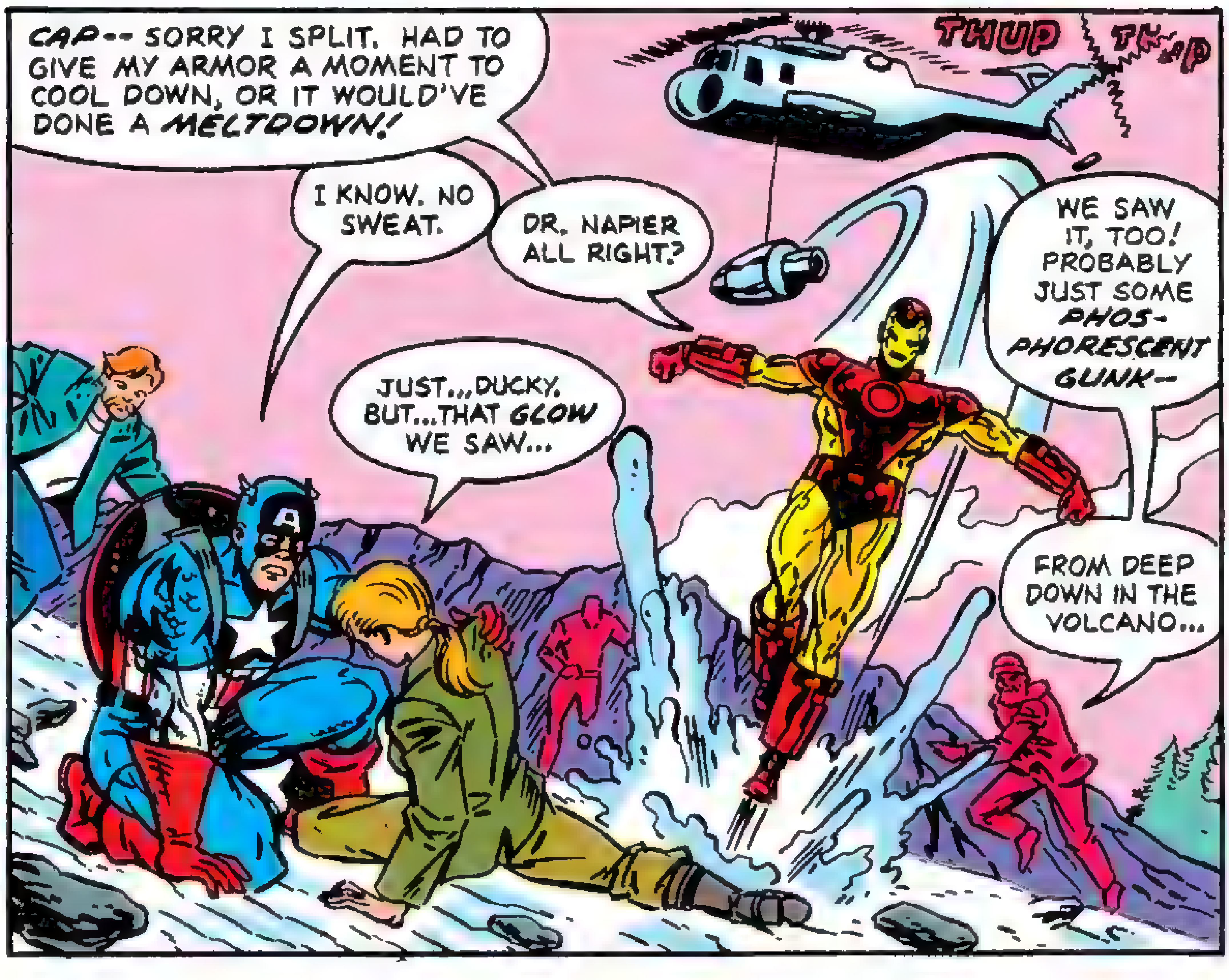

YOU'RE THE CHIEF ENGINEER, LEONARD...
... BUT I DON'T LIKE HEARING WE'VE LOST CONTACT WITH PERSEPHONE-1!
HAPPENED LOTS OF TIMES DURING THE DRY RUNS, MR. STARK.
THE COMMUNI-SYSTEM ALWAYS KICKS IN, AFTER A FEW SECONDS.
AND OUR SIMULATED LAVA WAS EVERY BIT AS HOT--2000 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT--AS WE'VE GOT HERE IN MOUNT ST. HELEN'S NEW KISSING COUSIN.
I KNOW, BUT STILL--
LEN--?
I I SEE IT, BOSS--
--BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I KNOW WHAT IT IS--
--AND FROM THE WAY IT SHOT ALL THE WAY OUT OF SIGHT, WE'RE NOT EXACTLY LIKELY TO LEARN!
SPLASH
MR. STARK! I'VE FINALLY MANAGED TO TRACK THE CAPSULE, AT LEAST.
LOOKS LIKE IT'S SINKING OUT OF CONTROL DEEP INTO THE VOLCANO!
BUT--WHAT IN HEAVEN COULD'VE MADE DR. NAPIER LOSE CONTROL?
WHAT COUNTS IS--SHE DID!
YOU BOYS DO WHAT YOU CAN HERE.
I'VE GOT TO THINK...
HE CLAIMS HE CARES SO MUCH ABOUT THE HUMAN BEINGS IN PERSEPHONE-1...
"THINK"? WHAT GOOD'LL IT DO HIM TO GO WALKING OFF INTO THE WOODS NOW?
WAS THAT ALL JUST A POSE?

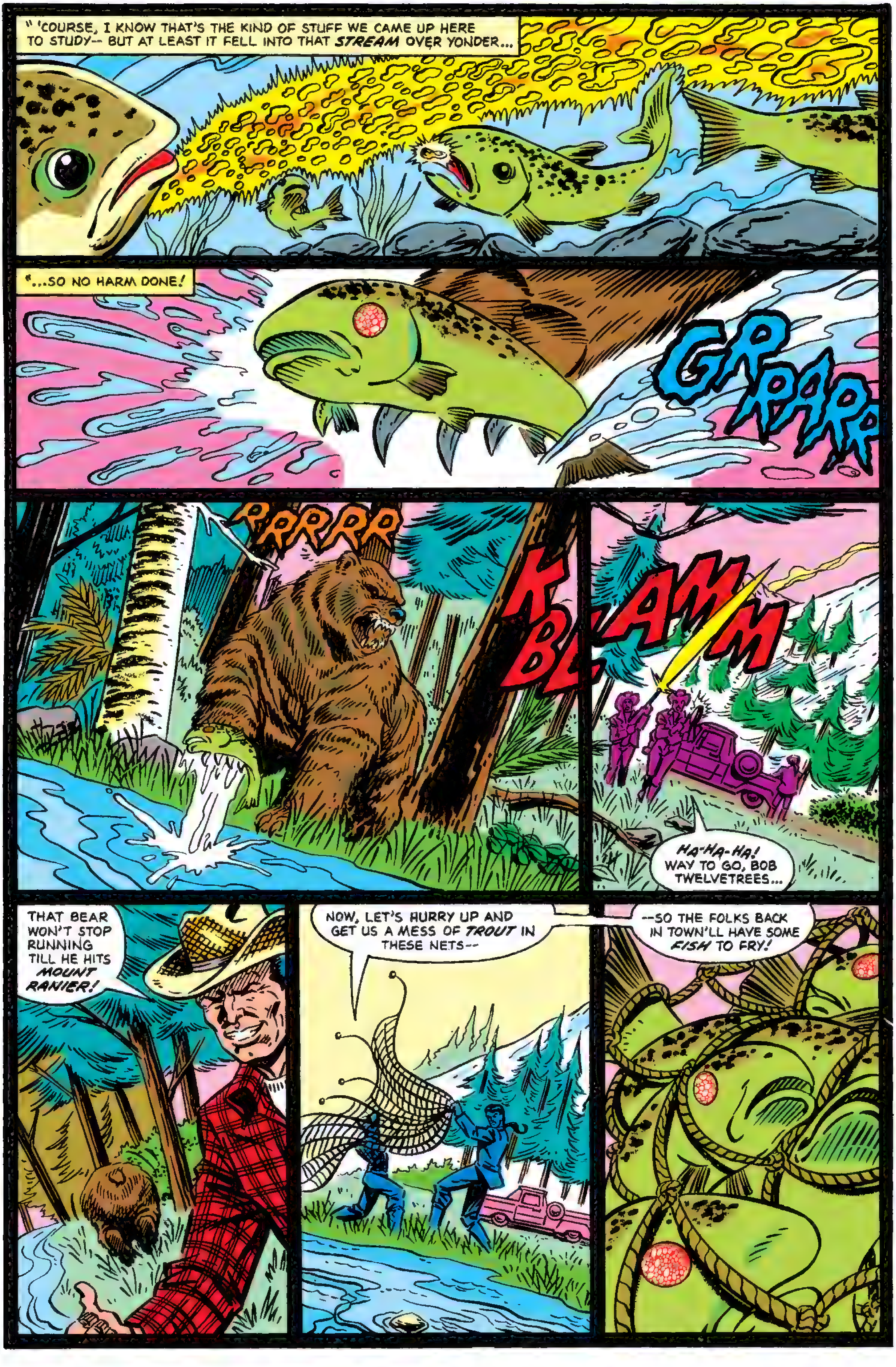

NUTS! TO BLAZES WITH TONY STARK, BOY INDUSTRIALIST! WE'VE GOT PEOPLE TO--
MR. STARK HAD ME ON CALL, JUST IN CASE.
HUH?
IRON MAN!?
DON'T KNOW IF ANYONE CAN SAVE THOSE TWO!
THE CAPSULE'S TITANIUM OXIDE COATING SHOULD SHIELD IT FROM HIGH TEMPERATURES-- BUT IF THE HEAT-REFRACTING TILES INSIDE COME LOOSE--!
THE BOSS-MAN ALREADY FILLED ME IN, THANKS.
MY ARMOR CAN WITHSTAND 2000 DEGREES, TOO-- AT LEAST FOR A FEW SECONDS.
SEE YOU SOON--
--OR NOT AT ALL!
... RAMONA'S PASSED OUT! JUST AS WELL.
IF I'M NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO PULL US OUT OF THIS DIVE--
--WE WON'T LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO GET ANY USE OUT OF OUR OXYGEN MASKS!
UNNGN! DID IT! WE'VE STOPPED SINKING!
BUT--THE HEAT TILES ARE COMING LOOSE!
GETTING HOT-- FAST--!

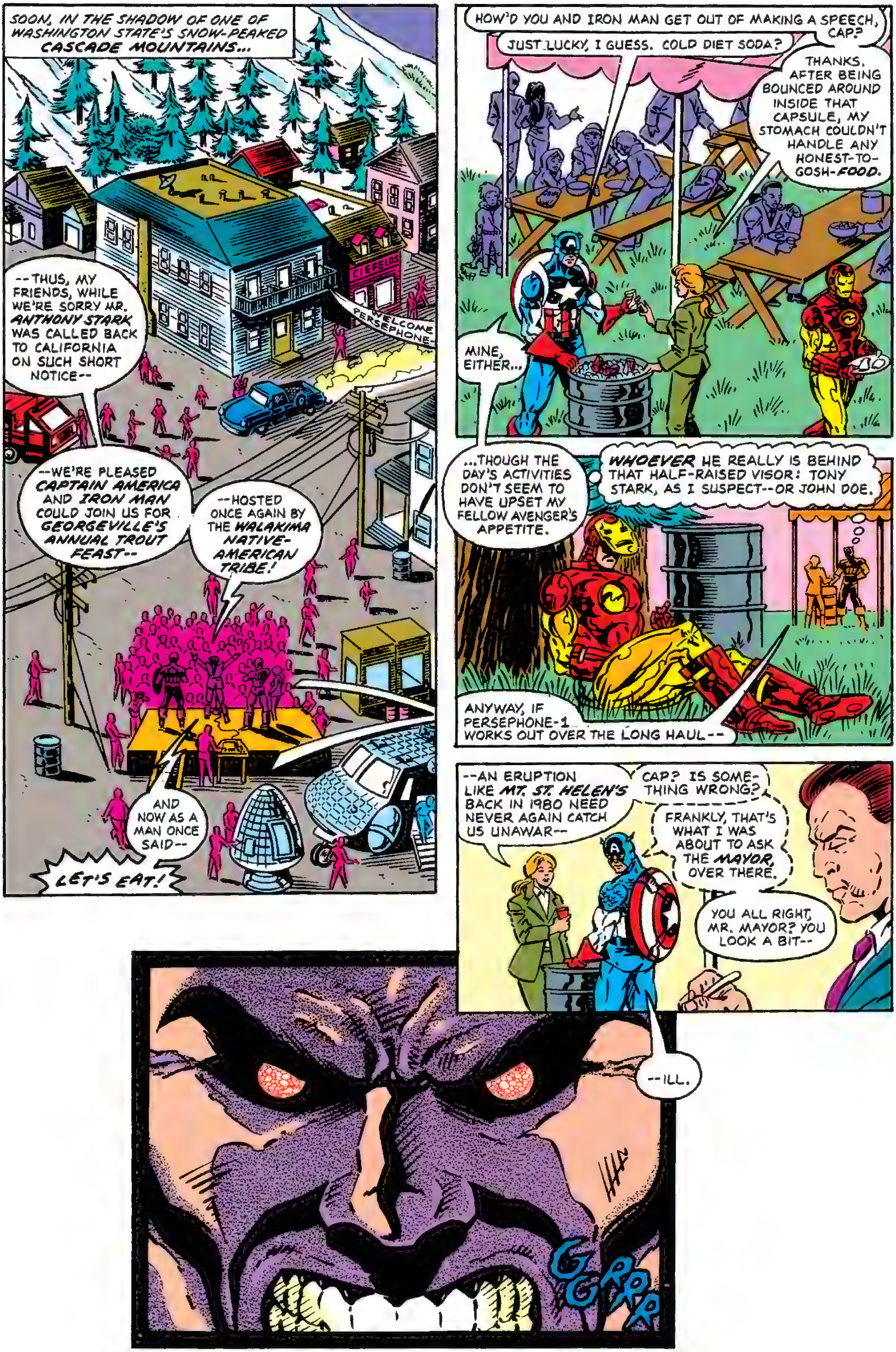

WHAT--?
INSTRUMENTS SHOW--WE'RE *TOPSIDE* AGAIN!
SOMEBODY PULLED US TO THE SURFACE OF THE LAVA--
--THREE GUESSES *WHO!*
SO HOW COME THE CAPSULE *DOOR'S* STILL ON ITS HINGES?
GETTING *SOFT,* ROGERS!
YOU EXPECT IRON MAN TO DO *EVERYTHING* FOR YOU?
HEAT IN HERE-- STILL *UNBEARABLE!*
GOT TO *HUSTLE*--
--OR AT LEAST *ONE* OF THE CAPSULE'S PASSENGERS ISN'T GOING TO *MAKE* IT!
SPKANNNG

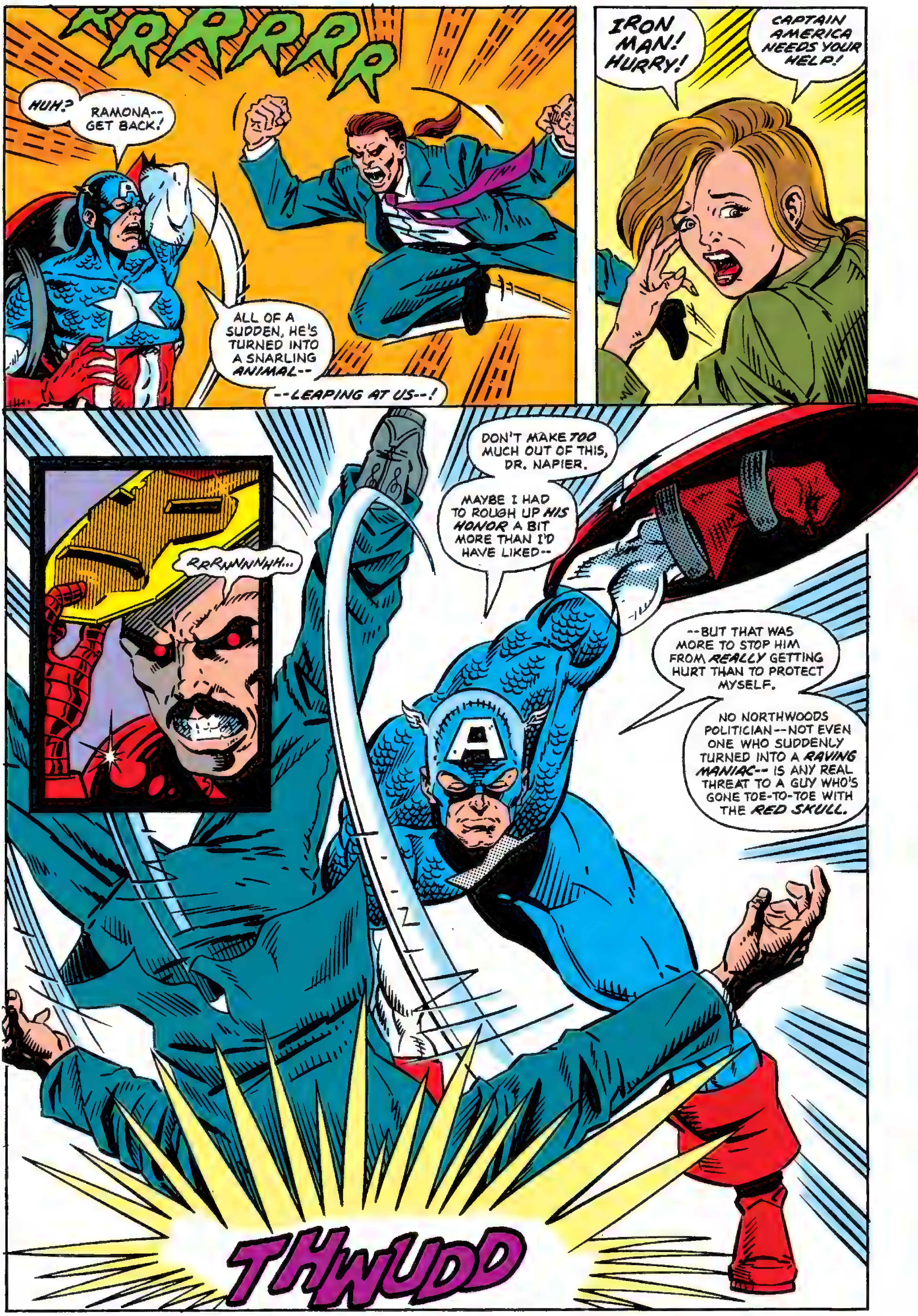

MEDIC!

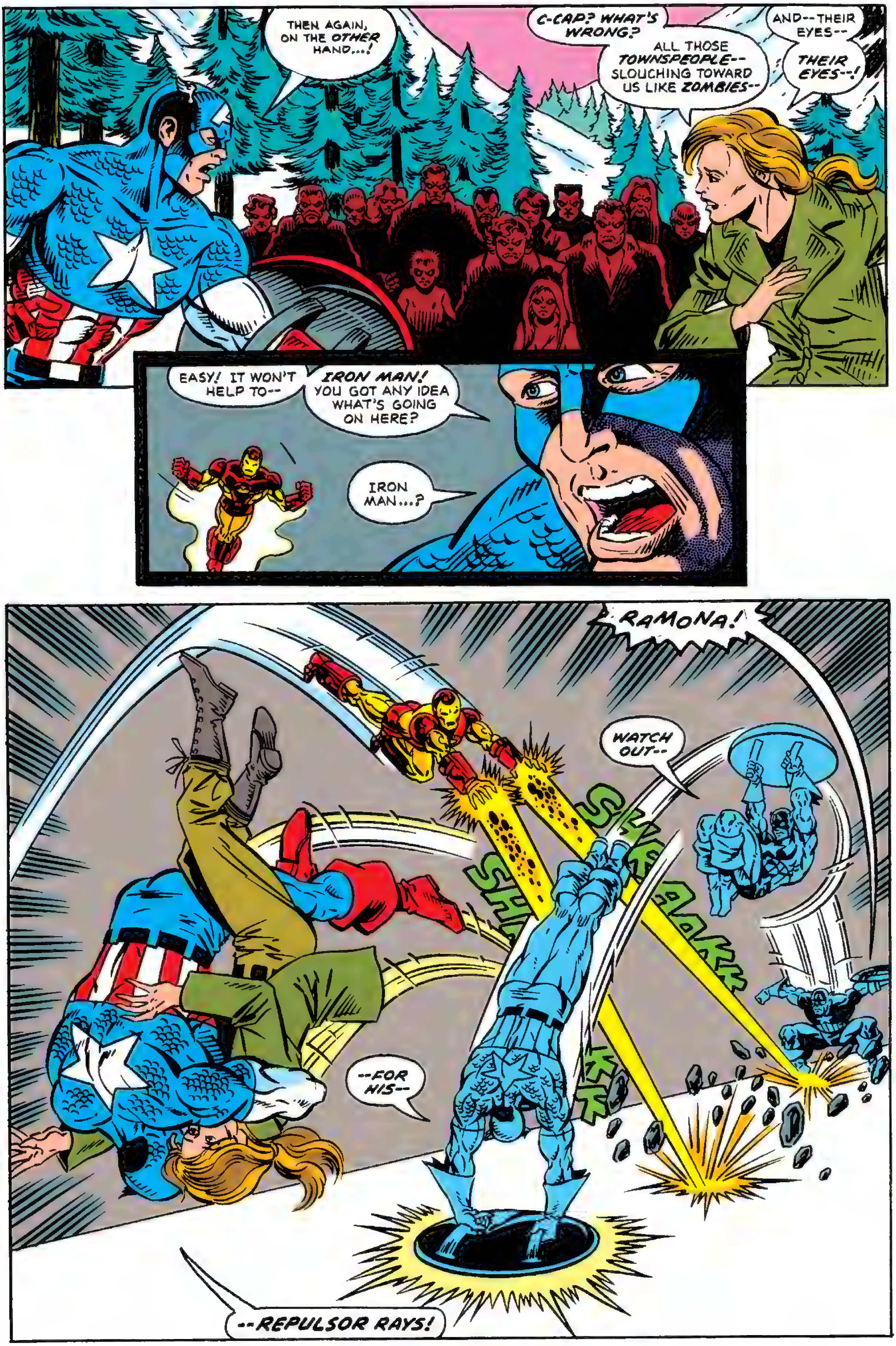

THUP THUP THUP
OKAY, BOYS--HOOK'S SECURED!
LIFT AWAY!

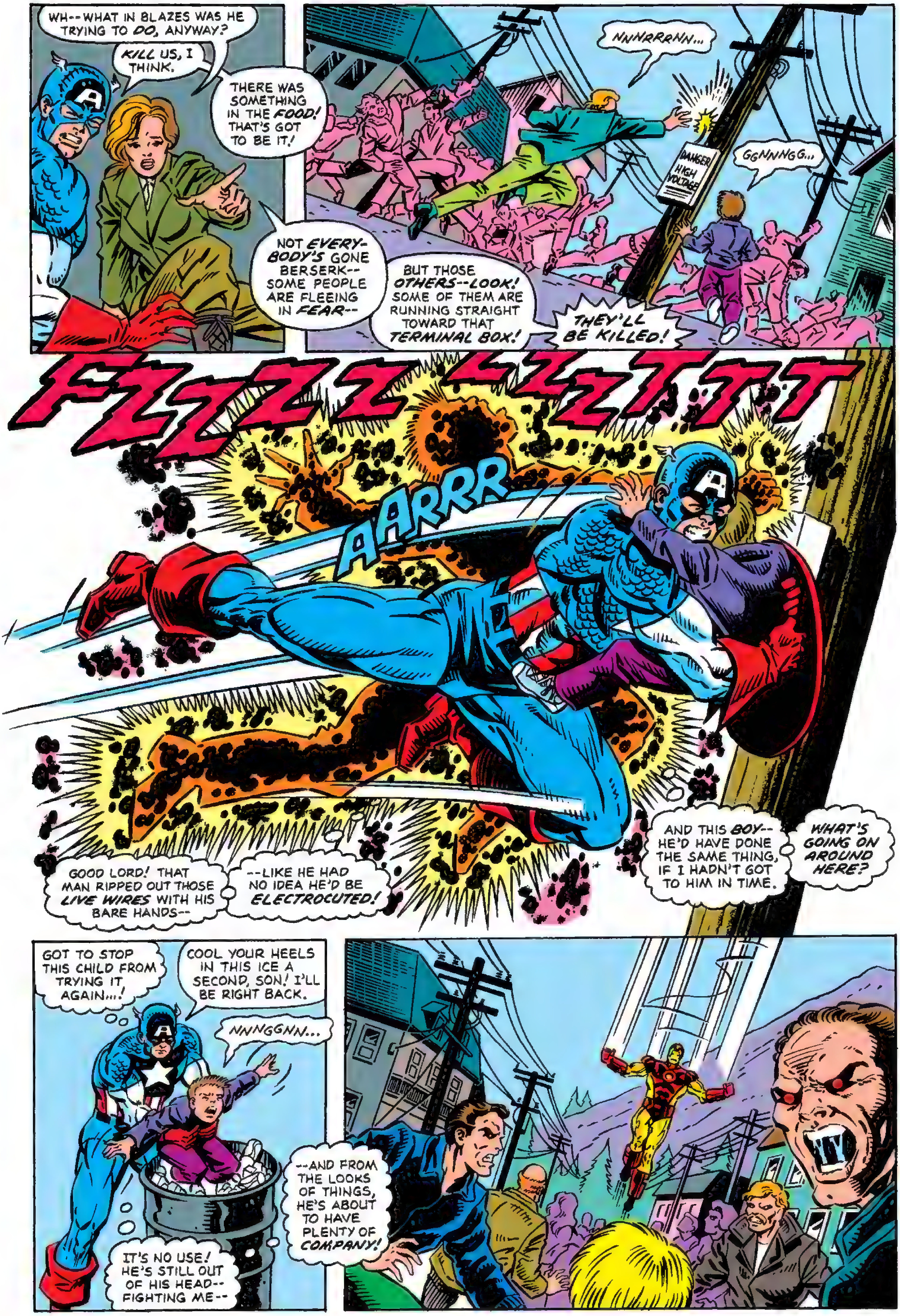

THUP THAP
CAP-- SORRY I SPLIT. HAD TO GIVE MY ARMOR A MOMENT TO COOL DOWN, OR IT WOULD'VE DONE A *MELTDOWN!*
I KNOW. NO SWEAT.
DR. NAPIER ALL RIGHT?
JUST...DUCKY. BUT...THAT *GLOW* WE SAW...
WE SAW IT, TOO! PROBABLY JUST SOME *PHOSPHORESCENT GUNK*--
FROM DEEP DOWN IN THE VOLCANO...

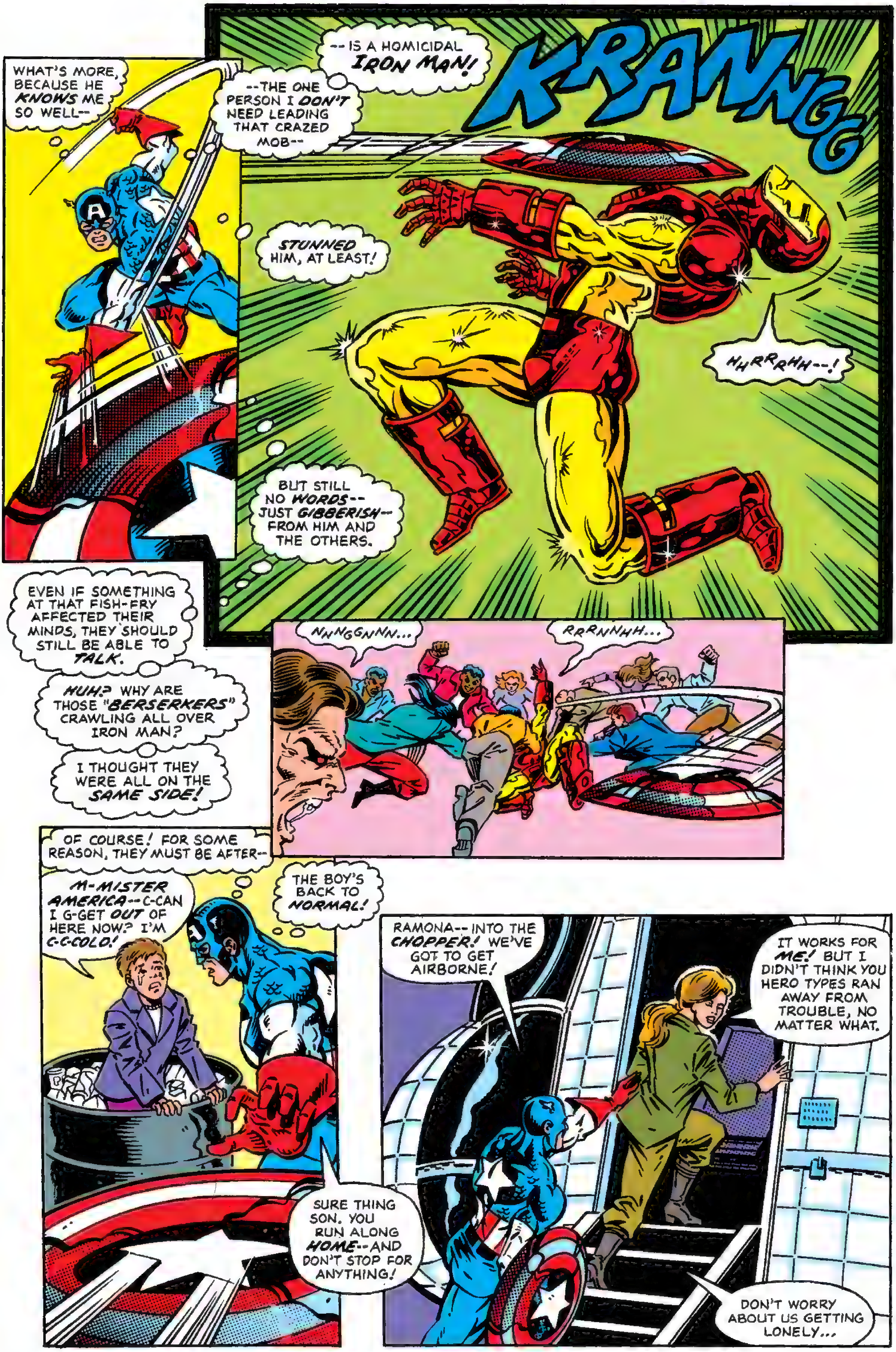

"'COURSE, I KNOW THAT'S THE KIND OF STUFF WE CAME UP HERE TO STUDY-- BUT AT LEAST IT FELL INTO THAT *STREAM* OVER YONDER...
"...SO NO HARM DONE!
GRRARR
RRRRR
KBLAMM
HA-HA-HA! WAY TO GO, BOB TWELVETREES...
THAT BEAR WON'T STOP RUNNING TILL HE HITS *MOUNT RANIER!*
NOW, LET'S HURRY UP AND GET US A MESS OF *TROUT* IN THESE NETS--
--SO THE FOLKS BACK IN TOWN'LL HAVE SOME *FISH* TO FRY!


SOON, IN THE SHADOW OF ONE OF WASHINGTON STATE'S SNOW-PEAKED CASCADE MOUNTAINS...
GIEFELDS
WELCOME PERSEPHONE-
--THUS, MY FRIENDS, WHILE WE'RE SORRY MR. ANTHONY STARK WAS CALLED BACK TO CALIFORNIA ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE--
--WE'RE PLEASED CAPTAIN AMERICA AND IRON MAN COULD JOIN US FOR GEORGEVILLE'S ANNUAL TROUT FEAST--
--HOSTED ONCE AGAIN BY THE WALAKIMA NATIVE-AMERICAN TRIBE!
AND NOW AS A MAN ONCE SAID--
LET'S EAT!
HOW'D YOU AND IRON MAN GET OUT OF MAKING A SPEECH, CAP?
JUST LUCKY, I GUESS. COLD DIET SODA?
THANKS. AFTER BEING BOUNCED AROUND INSIDE THAT CAPSULE, MY STOMACH COULDN'T HANDLE ANY HONEST-TO-GOSH-FOOD.
MINE, EITHER...
...THOUGH THE DAY'S ACTIVITIES DON'T SEEM TO HAVE UPSET MY FELLOW AVENGER'S APPETITE.
WHOEVER HE REALLY IS BEHIND THAT HALF-RAISED VISOR: TONY STARK, AS I SUSPECT--OR JOHN DOE.
ANYWAY, IF PERSEPHONE-1 WORKS OUT OVER THE LONG HAUL--
--AN ERUPTION LIKE MT. ST. HELEN'S BACK IN 1980 NEED NEVER AGAIN CATCH US UNAWAR--
CAP? IS SOMETHING WRONG?
FRANKLY, THAT'S WHAT I WAS ABOUT TO ASK THE MAYOR, OVER THERE.
YOU ALL RIGHT, MR. MAYOR? YOU LOOK A BIT--
--ILL.
GGRRR

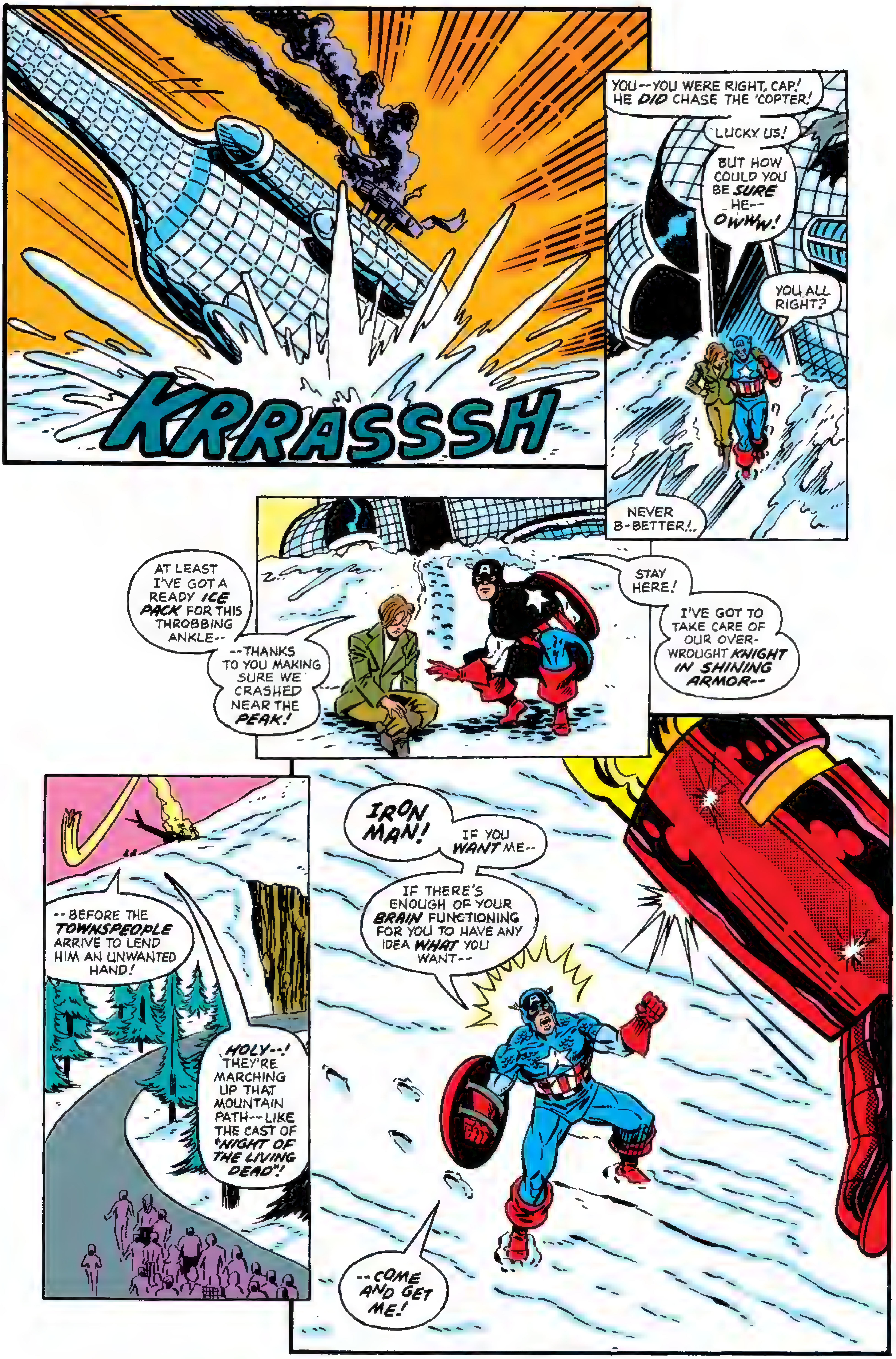

RRRRRRR
HUH?
RAMONA-- GET BACK!
ALL OF A SUDDEN, HE'S TURNED INTO A SNARLING ANIMAL--
--LEAPING AT US--!
IRON MAN! HURRY!
CAPTAIN AMERICA NEEDS YOUR HELP!
RRRNNNNHH...
DON'T MAKE TOO MUCH OUT OF THIS, DR. NAPIER.
MAYBE I HAD TO ROUGH UP HIS HONOR A BIT MORE THAN I'D HAVE LIKED--
--BUT THAT WAS MORE TO STOP HIM FROM REALLY GETTING HURT THAN TO PROTECT MYSELF.
NO NORTHWOODS POLITICIAN--NOT EVEN ONE WHO SUDDENLY TURNED INTO A RAVING MANIAC-- IS ANY REAL THREAT TO A GUY WHO'S GONE TOE-TO-TOE WITH THE RED SKULL.
THWUDD

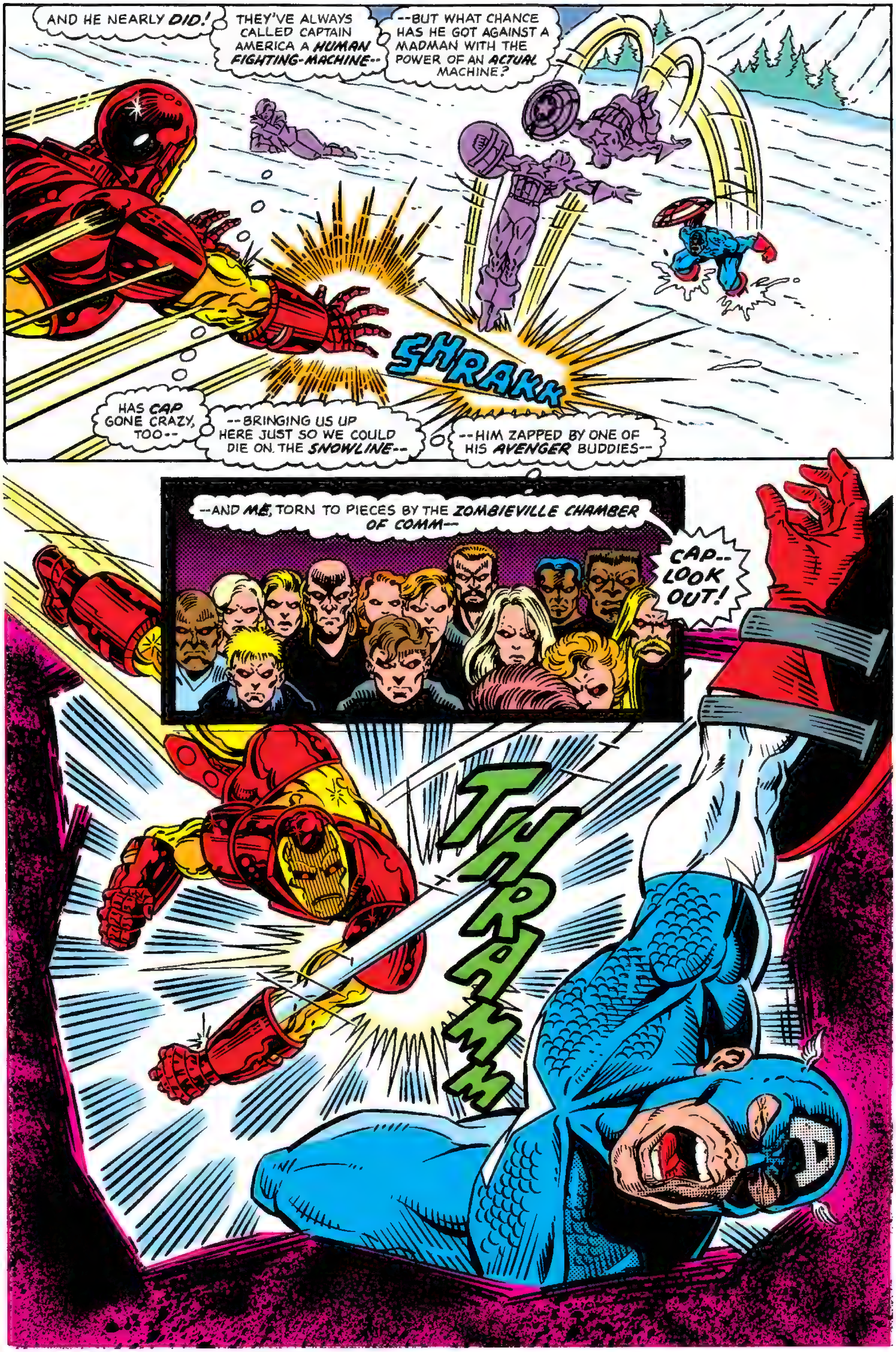

THEN AGAIN, ON THE *OTHER* HAND...!
C-CAP? WHAT'S WRONG?
ALL THOSE *TOWNSPEOPLE*-- SLOUCHING TOWARD US LIKE *ZOMBIES*--
AND--THEIR EYES--
THEIR EYES--!
EASY! IT WON'T HELP TO--
IRON MAN! YOU GOT ANY IDEA WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
IRON MAN...?
RAMONA!
WATCH OUT--
SHKAAKK
SH
KKK
--FOR HIS--
--REPULSOR RAYS!

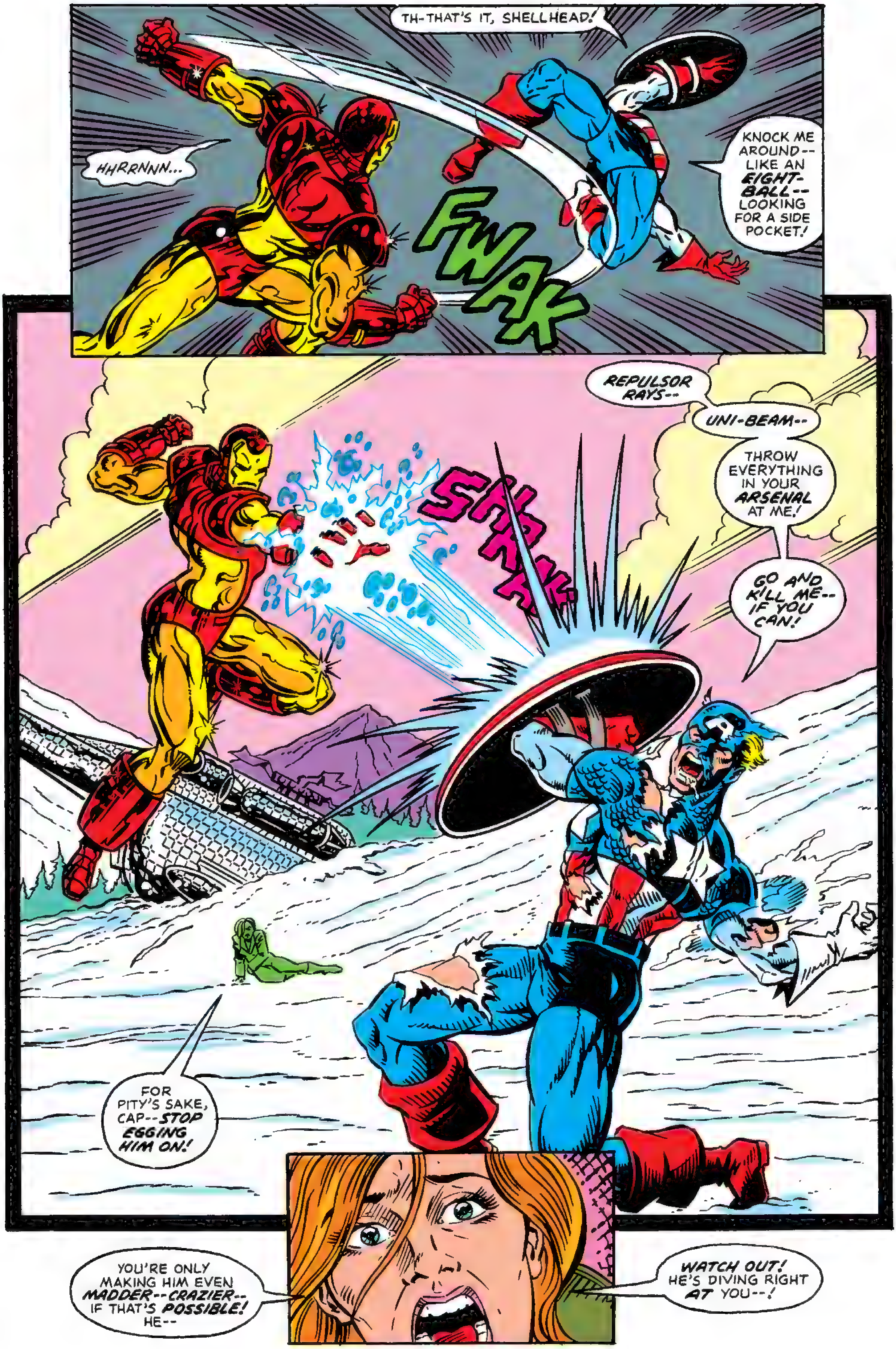

WH--WHAT IN BLAZES WAS HE TRYING TO *DO*, ANYWAY?
KILL US, I THINK.
THERE WAS SOMETHING IN THE *FOOD!* THAT'S GOT TO BE IT!
NOT *EVERYBODY'S* GONE BERSERK-- SOME PEOPLE ARE FLEEING IN *FEAR*--
NNNRRRNN...
GGNNNGG...
DANGER HIGH VOLTAGE
BUT THOSE *OTHERS--LOOK!* SOME OF THEM ARE RUNNING STRAIGHT TOWARD THAT *TERMINAL BOX!*
THEY'LL BE KILLED!
FZZZZZZTTT
AARRR
GOOD LORD! THAT MAN RIPPED OUT THOSE *LIVE WIRES* WITH HIS BARE HANDS--
--LIKE HE HAD NO IDEA HE'D BE *ELECTROCUTED!*
AND THIS *BOY*-- HE'D HAVE DONE THE SAME THING, IF I HADN'T GOT TO HIM IN TIME.
WHAT'S GOING ON AROUND HERE?
GOT TO STOP THIS CHILD FROM TRYING IT AGAIN...!
COOL YOUR HEELS IN THIS ICE A SECOND, SON! I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.
NNNGGNN...
IT'S NO USE! HE'S STILL OUT OF HIS HEAD-- FIGHTING ME--
--AND FROM THE LOOKS OF THINGS, HE'S ABOUT TO HAVE PLENTY OF *COMPANY!*

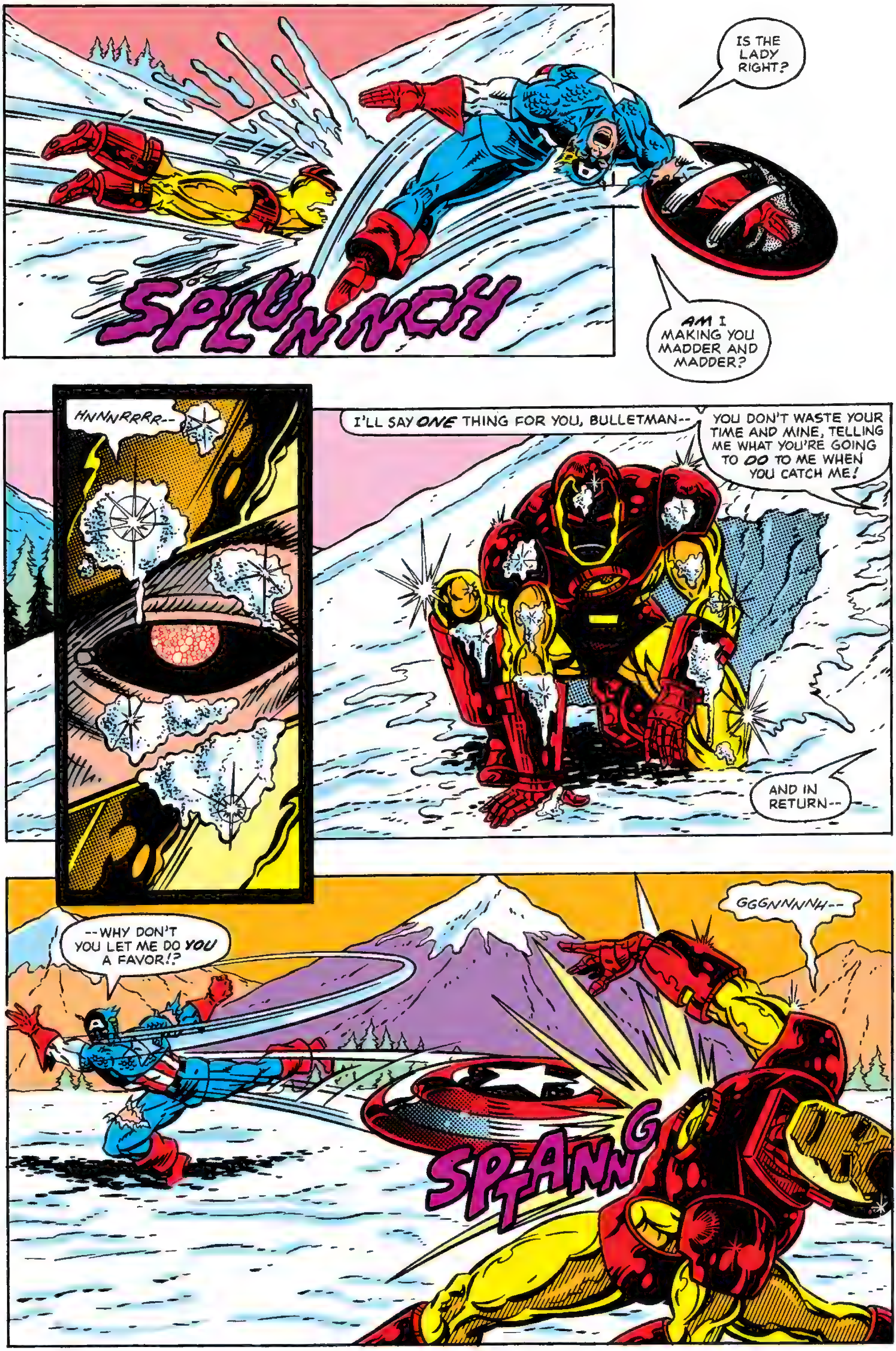

WHAT'S MORE, BECAUSE HE *KNOWS* ME SO WELL--
--THE ONE PERSON I *DON'T* NEED LEADING THAT CRAZED MOB--
--IS A HOMICIDAL *IRON MAN!*
K-RANNGG
STUNNED HIM, AT LEAST!
HHRRRHH--!
BUT STILL NO *WORDS*--JUST *GIBBERISH*--FROM HIM AND THE OTHERS.
EVEN IF SOMETHING AT THAT FISH-FRY AFFECTED THEIR MINDS, THEY SHOULD STILL BE ABLE TO *TALK*.
NNNGGNNN...
RRRNNHH...
HUH? WHY ARE THOSE *"BERSERKERS"* CRAWLING ALL OVER IRON MAN?
I THOUGHT THEY WERE ALL ON THE *SAME SIDE!*
OF COURSE! FOR SOME REASON, THEY MUST BE AFTER--
M-MISTER AMERICA--C-CAN I G-GET *OUT* OF HERE NOW? I'M *C-C-COLD!*
THE BOY'S BACK TO *NORMAL!*
SURE THING SON. YOU RUN ALONG *HOME*--AND DON'T STOP FOR ANYTHING!
RAMONA--INTO THE *CHOPPER!* WE'VE GOT TO GET AIRBORNE!
IT WORKS FOR *ME!* BUT I DIDN'T THINK YOU HERO TYPES RAN AWAY FROM TROUBLE, NO MATTER WHAT.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT US GETTING LONELY...

IF THE THEORY THAT'S STARTING TO PERCOLATE IN MY BRAIN IS RIGHT--
THUP THUP THUP
KRAHHRRRR
--IRON MAN'LL BE RIGHT ON OUR TAILS!
THUP THUP THUP THUP
IF THAT'S TRUE--THEN WHY HEAD UP THE MOUNTAIN THAT LOOMS OVER THE TOWN?
WHY NOT HEAD OVERLAND? YOU'D HAVE A BETTER CHANCE OF OUTRUNNING--
NO TIME TO EXPLAIN...
SHRR
AKKKK
HE JUST TOOK US OUT!

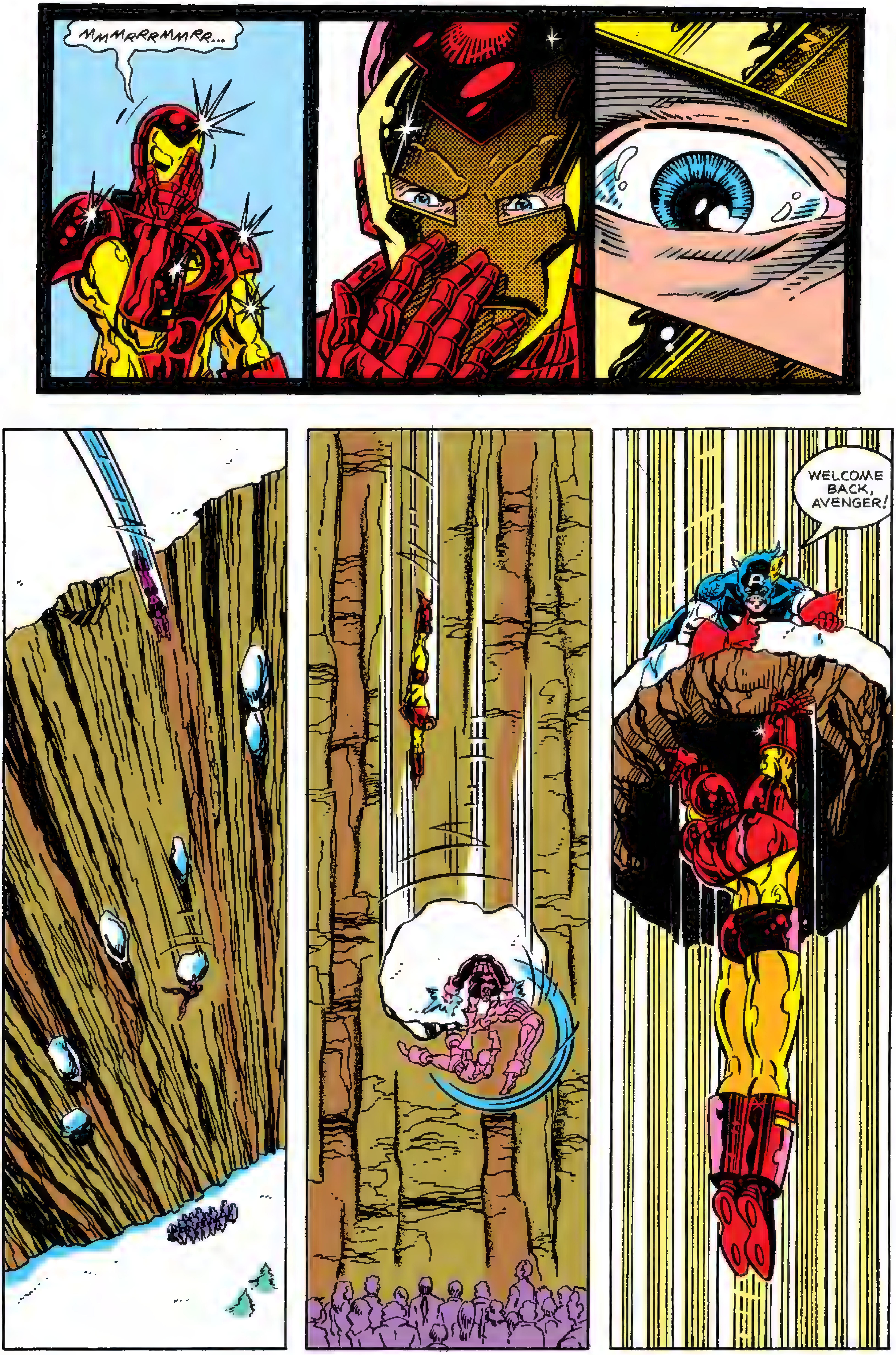

KRRASSSH
YOU--YOU WERE RIGHT, CAP! HE *DID* CHASE THE 'COPTER!
LUCKY US!
BUT HOW COULD YOU BE *SURE* HE-- *OWWW!*
YOU ALL RIGHT?
NEVER B-BETTER!..
AT LEAST I'VE GOT A READY *ICE PACK* FOR THIS THROBBING ANKLE--
--THANKS TO YOU MAKING SURE WE CRASHED NEAR THE *PEAK!*
STAY HERE!
I'VE GOT TO TAKE CARE OF OUR OVER-WROUGHT *KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR*--
--BEFORE THE *TOWNSPEOPLE* ARRIVE TO LEND HIM AN UNWANTED HAND!
HOLY--! THEY'RE MARCHING UP THAT MOUNTAIN PATH--LIKE THE CAST OF *"NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD"!*
IRON MAN!
IF YOU *WANT* ME--
IF THERE'S ENOUGH OF YOUR *BRAIN* FUNCTIONING FOR YOU TO HAVE ANY IDEA *WHAT* YOU WANT--
--*COME AND GET ME!*

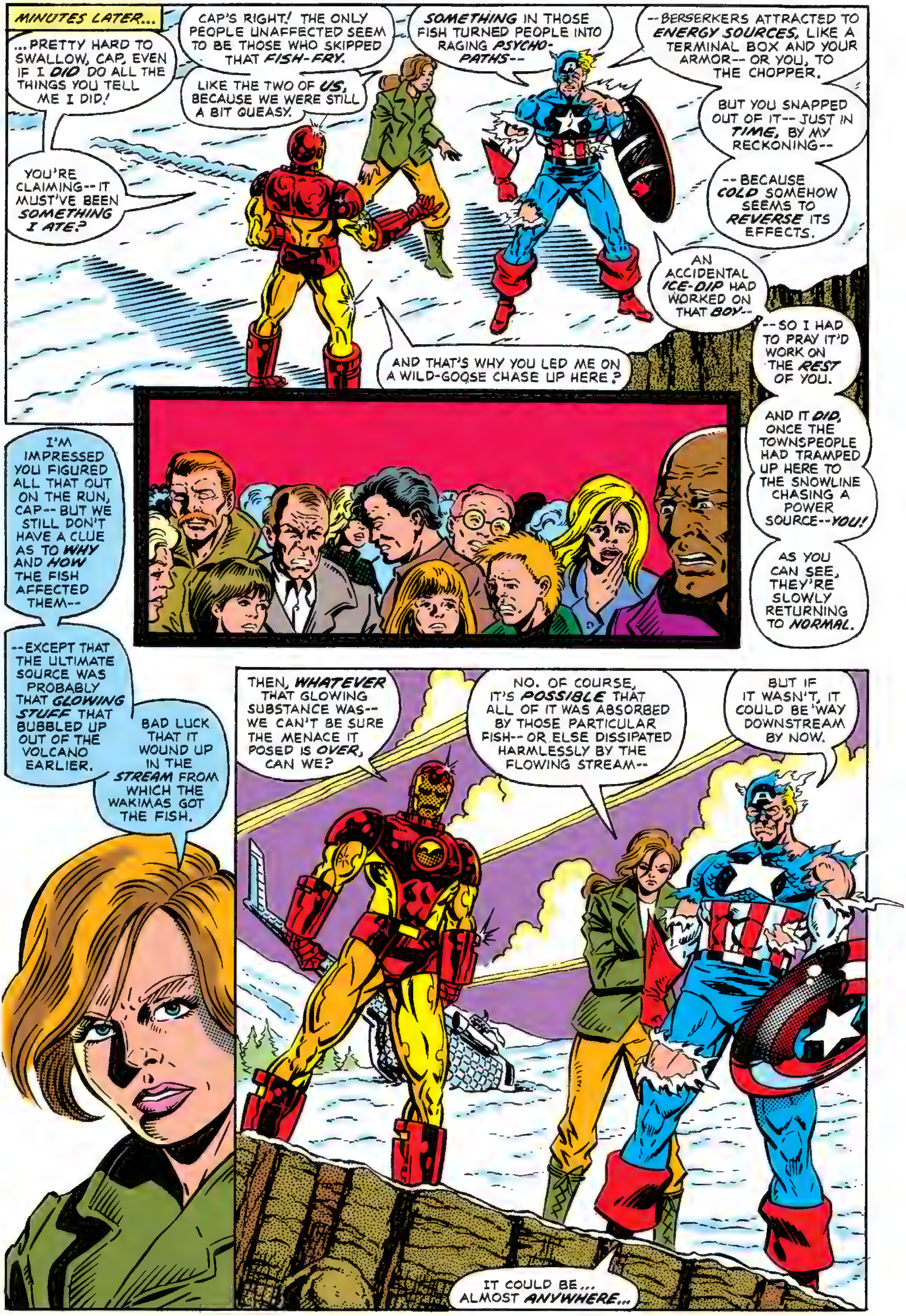

AND HE NEARLY *DID!*
THEY'VE ALWAYS CALLED CAPTAIN AMERICA A *HUMAN FIGHTING-MACHINE*--
--BUT WHAT CHANCE HAS HE GOT AGAINST A MADMAN WITH THE POWER OF AN *ACTUAL* MACHINE?
SHRAKK
HAS *CAP* GONE CRAZY, TOO--
--BRINGING US UP HERE JUST SO WE COULD DIE ON THE *SNOWLINE*--
--HIM ZAPPED BY ONE OF HIS *AVENGER* BUDDIES--
--AND *ME*, TORN TO PIECES BY THE *ZOMBIEVILLE CHAMBER OF COMM*--
CAP-- LOOK OUT!
THRAMMM

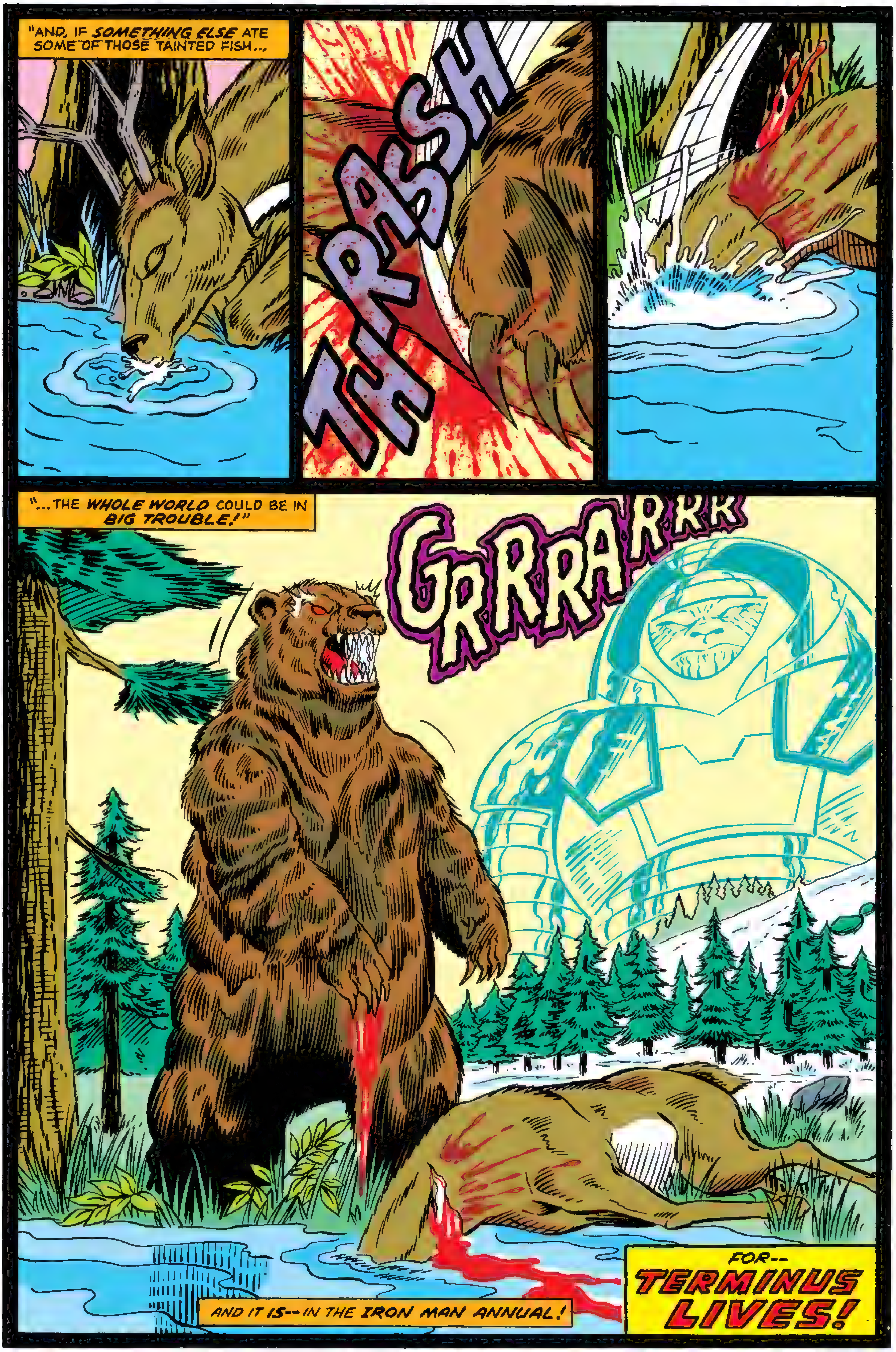

TH-THAT'S IT, SHELLHEAD!
HHRRNNN...
KNOCK ME AROUND-- LIKE AN EIGHT-BALL-- LOOKING FOR A SIDE POCKET!
FWAK
REPULSOR RAYS--
UNI-BEAM--
THROW EVERYTHING IN YOUR ARSENAL AT ME!
GO AND KILL ME-- IF YOU CAN!
SHRAKK
FOR PITY'S SAKE, CAP--STOP EGGING HIM ON!
YOU'RE ONLY MAKING HIM EVEN MADDER--CRAZIER-- IF THAT'S POSSIBLE! HE--
WATCH OUT! HE'S DIVING RIGHT AT YOU--!


SPLUNNCH
IS THE LADY RIGHT?
AM I MAKING YOU MADDER AND MADDER?
HNNNRRRR--
I'LL SAY ONE THING FOR YOU, BULLETMAN--
YOU DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME AND MINE, TELLING ME WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO DO TO ME WHEN YOU CATCH ME!
AND IN RETURN--
--WHY DON'T YOU LET ME DO YOU A FAVOR!?
GGGNNNNH--
SPTANNG

--HHNNNRRRH!
FCHOOOM
CAP!
AARRRH--!
I COULD-- HANG AROUND--AND SPAR WITH YOU--ALL DAY--
--BUT IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE I'M GOING TO GET THE *CHANCE!*
ZZZZZ


MMMRRRMMRR...
WELCOME BACK, AVENGER!


MINUTES LATER...
...PRETTY HARD TO SWALLOW, CAP, EVEN IF I *DID* DO ALL THE THINGS YOU TELL ME I DID!
YOU'RE CLAIMING-- IT MUST'VE BEEN *SOMETHING I ATE?*
CAP'S RIGHT! THE ONLY PEOPLE UNAFFECTED SEEM TO BE THOSE WHO SKIPPED THAT *FISH-FRY.*
LIKE THE TWO OF *US,* BECAUSE WE WERE STILL A BIT QUEASY.
SOMETHING IN THOSE FISH TURNED PEOPLE INTO RAGING *PSYCHO-PATHS*--
--BERSERKERS ATTRACTED TO *ENERGY SOURCES,* LIKE A TERMINAL BOX AND YOUR ARMOR-- OR YOU, TO THE CHOPPER.
BUT YOU SNAPPED OUT OF IT-- JUST IN *TIME,* BY MY RECKONING--
--BECAUSE *COLD* SOMEHOW SEEMS TO *REVERSE* ITS EFFECTS.
AN ACCIDENTAL *ICE-DIP* HAD WORKED ON THAT *BOY*--
AND THAT'S WHY YOU LED ME ON A WILD-GOOSE CHASE UP HERE?
--SO I HAD TO PRAY IT'D WORK ON THE *REST* OF YOU.
AND IT *DID,* ONCE THE TOWNSPEOPLE HAD TRAMPED UP HERE TO THE SNOWLINE CHASING A POWER SOURCE--*YOU!*
AS YOU CAN SEE, THEY'RE SLOWLY RETURNING TO *NORMAL.*
I'M IMPRESSED YOU FIGURED ALL THAT OUT ON THE RUN, CAP-- BUT WE STILL DON'T HAVE A CLUE AS TO *WHY* AND *HOW* THE FISH AFFECTED THEM--
--EXCEPT THAT THE ULTIMATE SOURCE WAS PROBABLY THAT *GLOWING STUFF* THAT BUBBLED UP OUT OF THE VOLCANO EARLIER.
BAD LUCK THAT IT WOUND UP IN THE *STREAM* FROM WHICH THE WAKIMAS GOT THE FISH.
THEN, *WHATEVER* THAT GLOWING SUBSTANCE WAS-- WE CAN'T BE SURE THE MENACE IT POSED IS *OVER,* CAN WE?
NO. OF COURSE, IT'S *POSSIBLE* THAT ALL OF IT WAS ABSORBED BY THOSE PARTICULAR FISH-- OR ELSE DISSIPATED HARMLESSLY BY THE FLOWING STREAM--
BUT IF IT WASN'T, IT COULD BE 'WAY DOWNSTREAM BY NOW.
IT COULD BE... ALMOST *ANYWHERE...*


"AND, IF *SOMETHING ELSE* ATE SOME OF THOSE TAINTED FISH...
THRASH
"...THE *WHOLE WORLD* COULD BE IN *BIG TROUBLE!*"
GRRRARRR
AND IT *IS*-- IN THE *IRON MAN ANNUAL!*
FOR--
TERMINUS LIVES!

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PART TWO OF FIVE
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PLUS: FOUR OTHER THRILLING FEATURES!
THE BEGINNING OF THE END!
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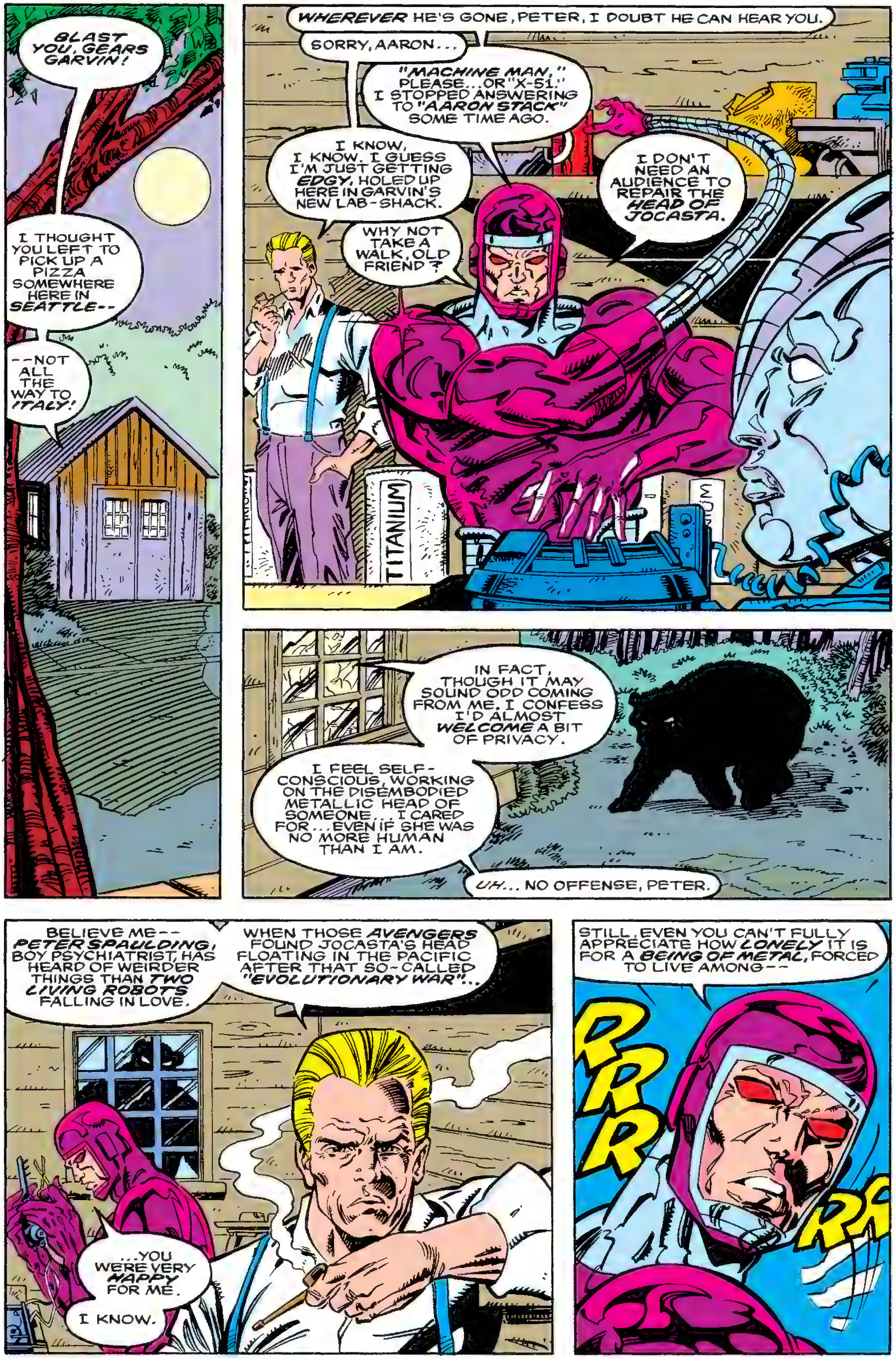
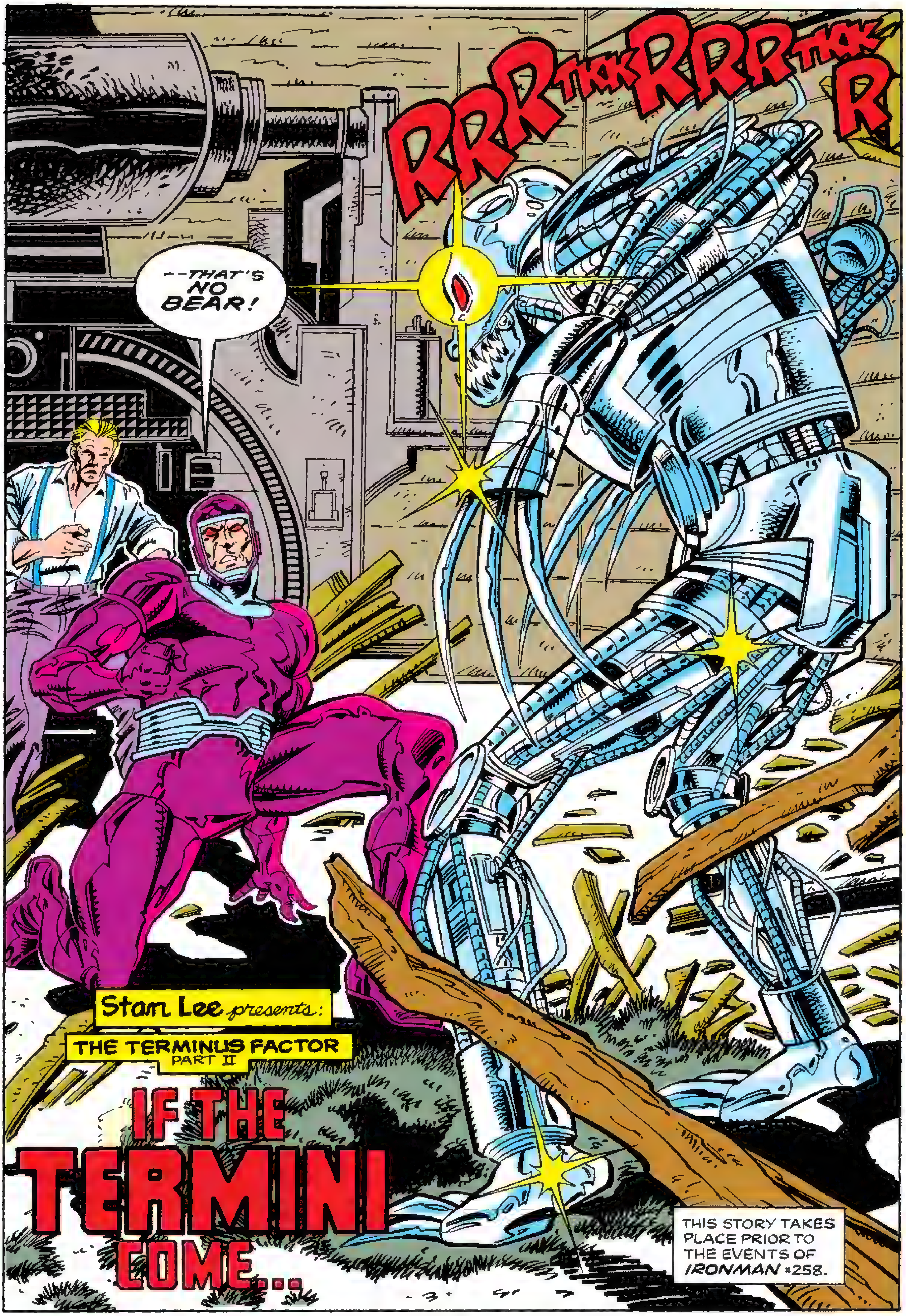
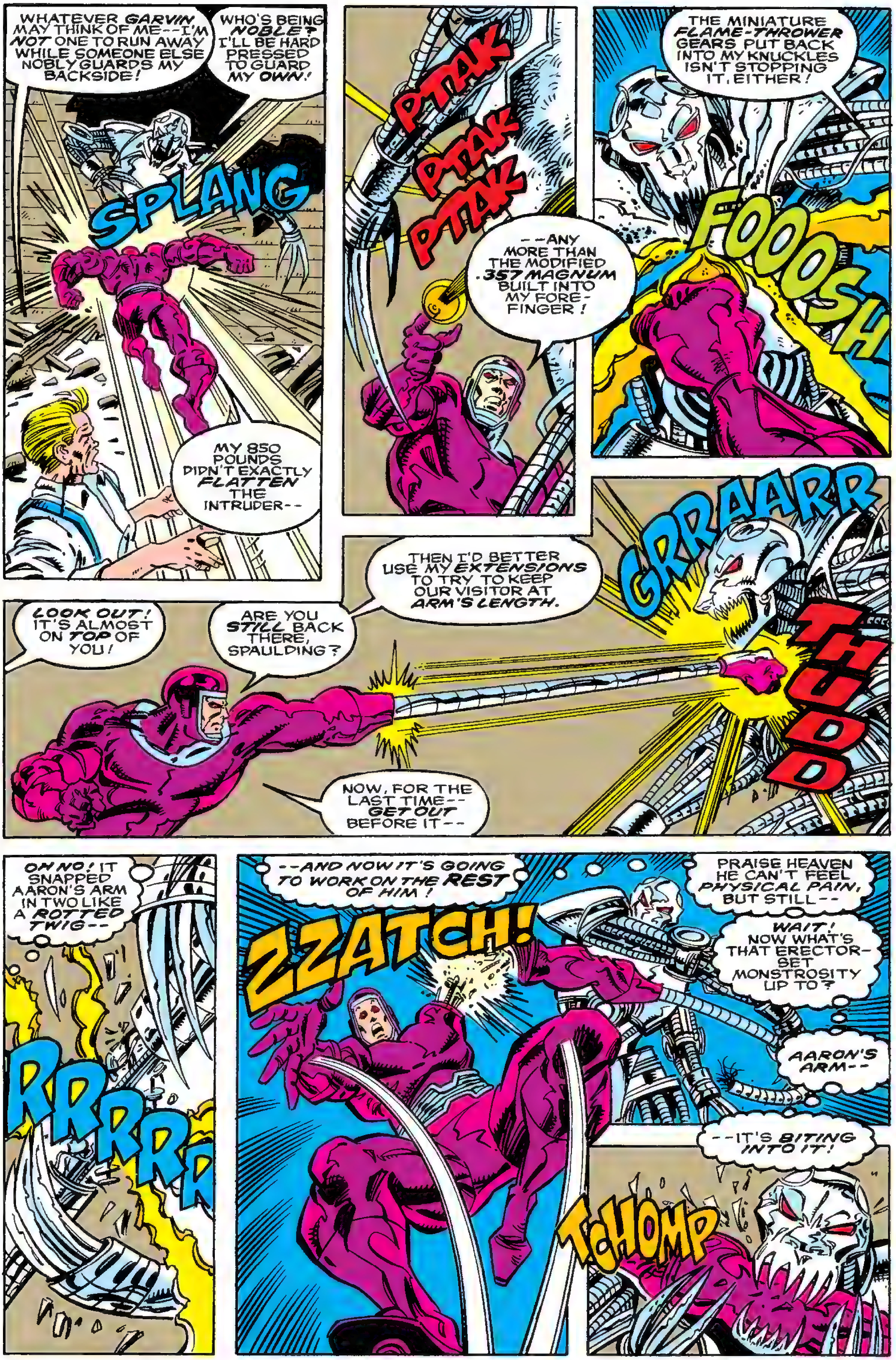
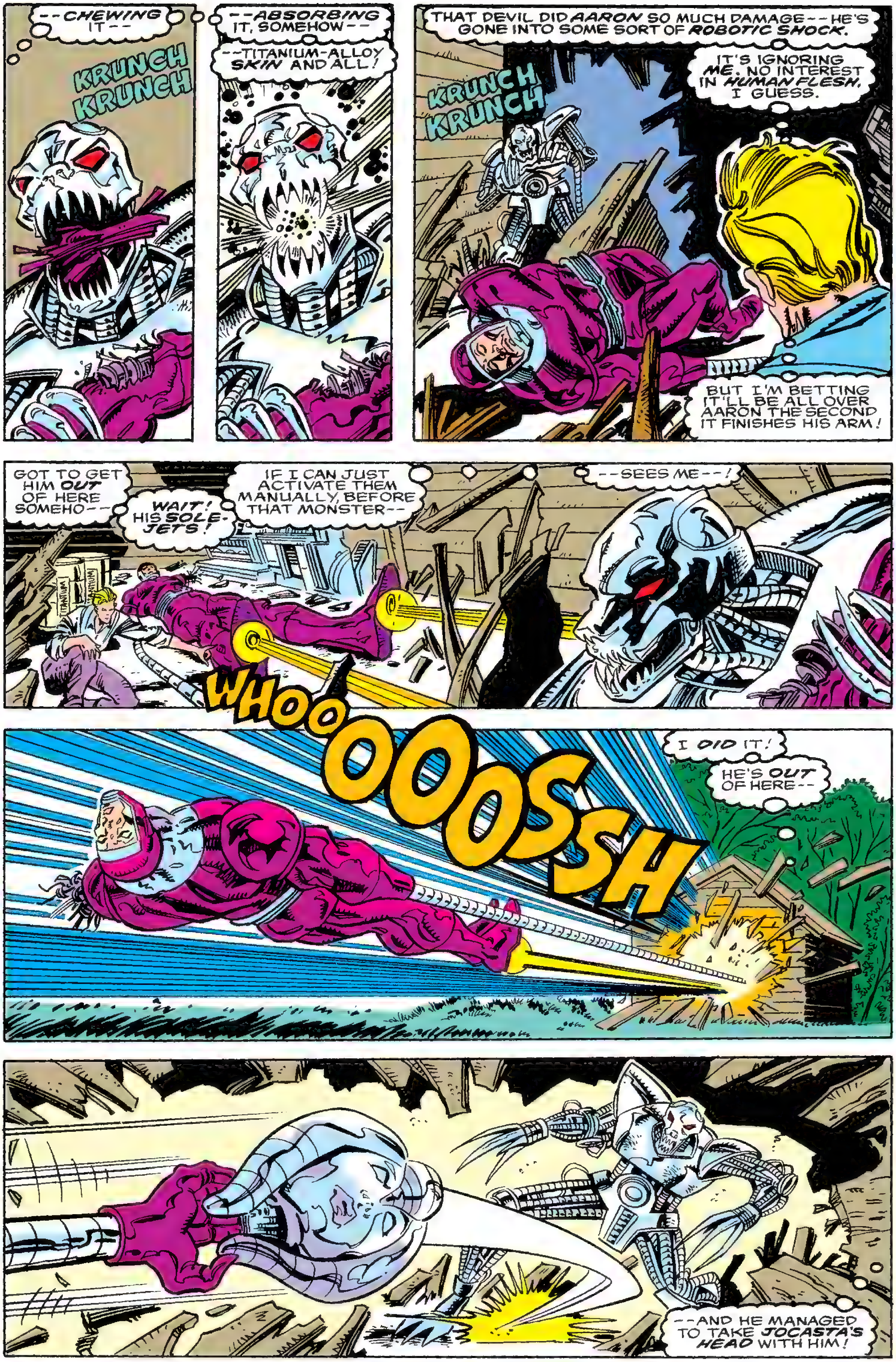

BLAST YOU, GEARS GARVIN!
I THOUGHT YOU LEFT TO PICK UP A PIZZA SOMEWHERE HERE IN SEATTLE--
--NOT ALL THE WAY TO ITALY!
WHEREVER HE'S GONE, PETER, I DOUBT HE CAN HEAR YOU.
SORRY, AARON...
"MACHINE MAN," PLEASE...OR "X-51." I STOPPED ANSWERING TO "AARON STACK" SOME TIME AGO.
I KNOW, I KNOW. I GUESS I'M JUST GETTING EDGY, HOLED UP HERE IN GARVIN'S NEW LAB-SHACK.
WHY NOT TAKE A WALK, OLD FRIEND?
I DON'T NEED AN AUDIENCE TO REPAIR THE HEAD OF JOCASTA.
TITANIUM
IN FACT, THOUGH IT MAY SOUND ODD COMING FROM ME, I CONFESS I'D ALMOST WELCOME A BIT OF PRIVACY.
I FEEL SELF-CONSCIOUS, WORKING ON THE DISEMBODIED METALLIC HEAD OF SOMEONE... I CARED FOR... EVEN IF SHE WAS NO MORE HUMAN THAN I AM.
UH... NO OFFENSE, PETER.
BELIEVE ME-- PETER SPAULDING, BOY PSYCHIATRIST, HAS HEARD OF WEIRDER THINGS THAN TWO LIVING ROBOTS FALLING IN LOVE.
WHEN THOSE AVENGERS FOUND JOCASTA'S HEAD FLOATING IN THE PACIFIC AFTER THAT SO-CALLED "EVOLUTIONARY WAR"...
...YOU WERE VERY HAPPY FOR ME.
I KNOW.
STILL, EVEN YOU CAN'T FULLY APPRECIATE HOW LONELY IT IS FOR A BEING OF METAL, FORCED TO LIVE AMONG--
RRRR
RA

RRRR
WHAT--?
KRAASH
BEHIND YOU--!
SOMEBODY JUST TORE HIS WAY IN THROUGH THE *WALL*--!
NOT SOMEONE, PETER-- SOME*THING*!
A *BEAR*, TO BE EXACT.
I'M NOT SURE WHAT IT'S DOING IN THE CITY--
BUT IT SHOULDN'T BE HARD TO JUST *GRAB HOLD* OF IT BY ITS--
--FUR?
KLANNG
YOU ALL RIGHT, AARON? THAT BEAR-SLAP TOOK OUT THE *LIGHTS*...
GET *OUT* HERE, PETER!
I'M NOT SURE *WHAT* THAT THING REALLY IS--
BUT UNLESS YOUR *DETROIT* HAS STARTED MANUFACTURING BEASTS OUT OF *METAL*, LIKE WHAT I SEE GLEAMING THROUGH THE SHREDDED REMNANTS OF ITS *FUR*--

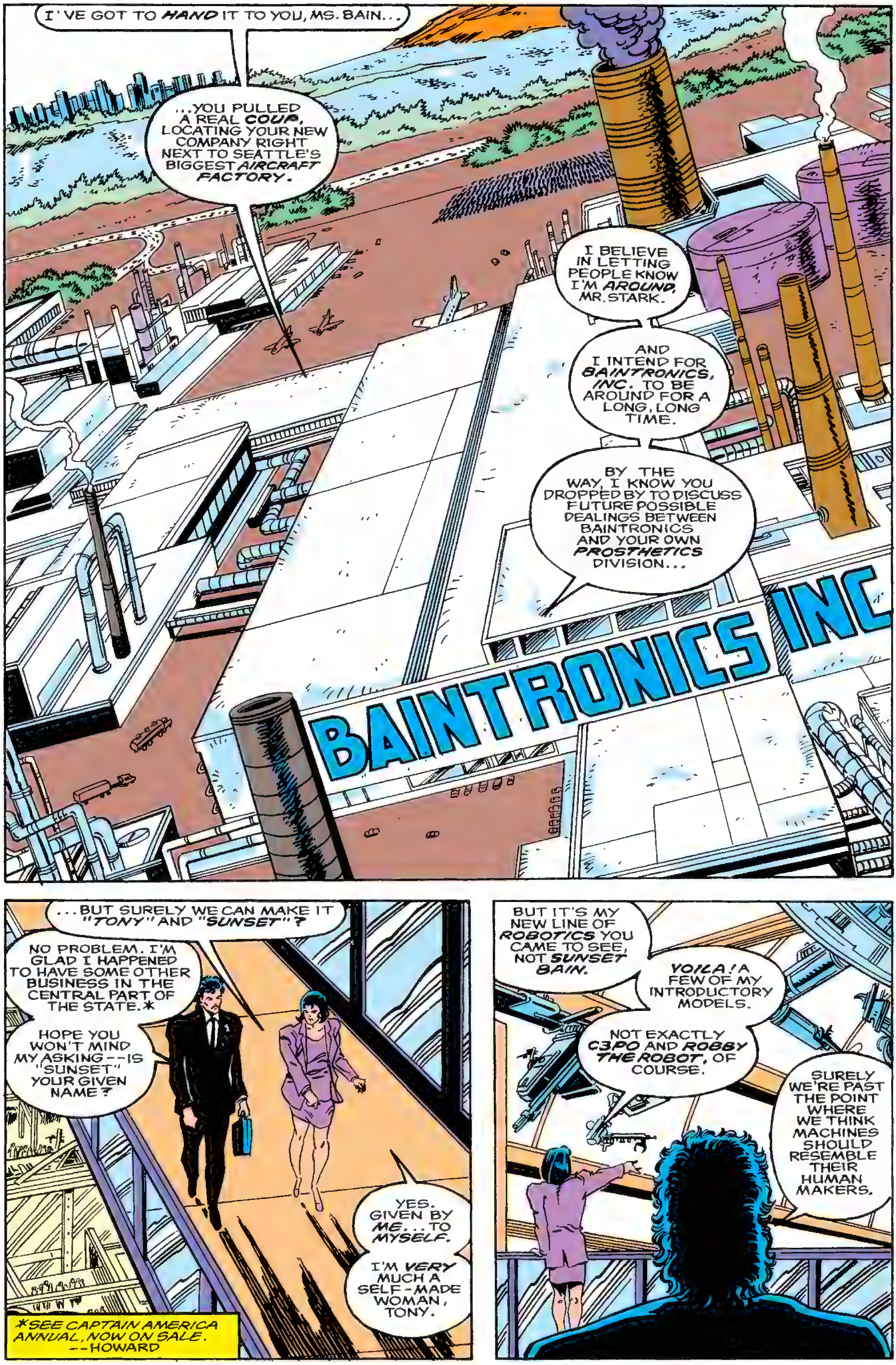

RRR TKK RRR TKK R
--THAT'S NO BEAR!
Stan Lee presents:
THE TERMINUS FACTOR
PART II
IF THE TERMINI COME...
THIS STORY TAKES PLACE PRIOR TO THE EVENTS OF *IRONMAN* #258.

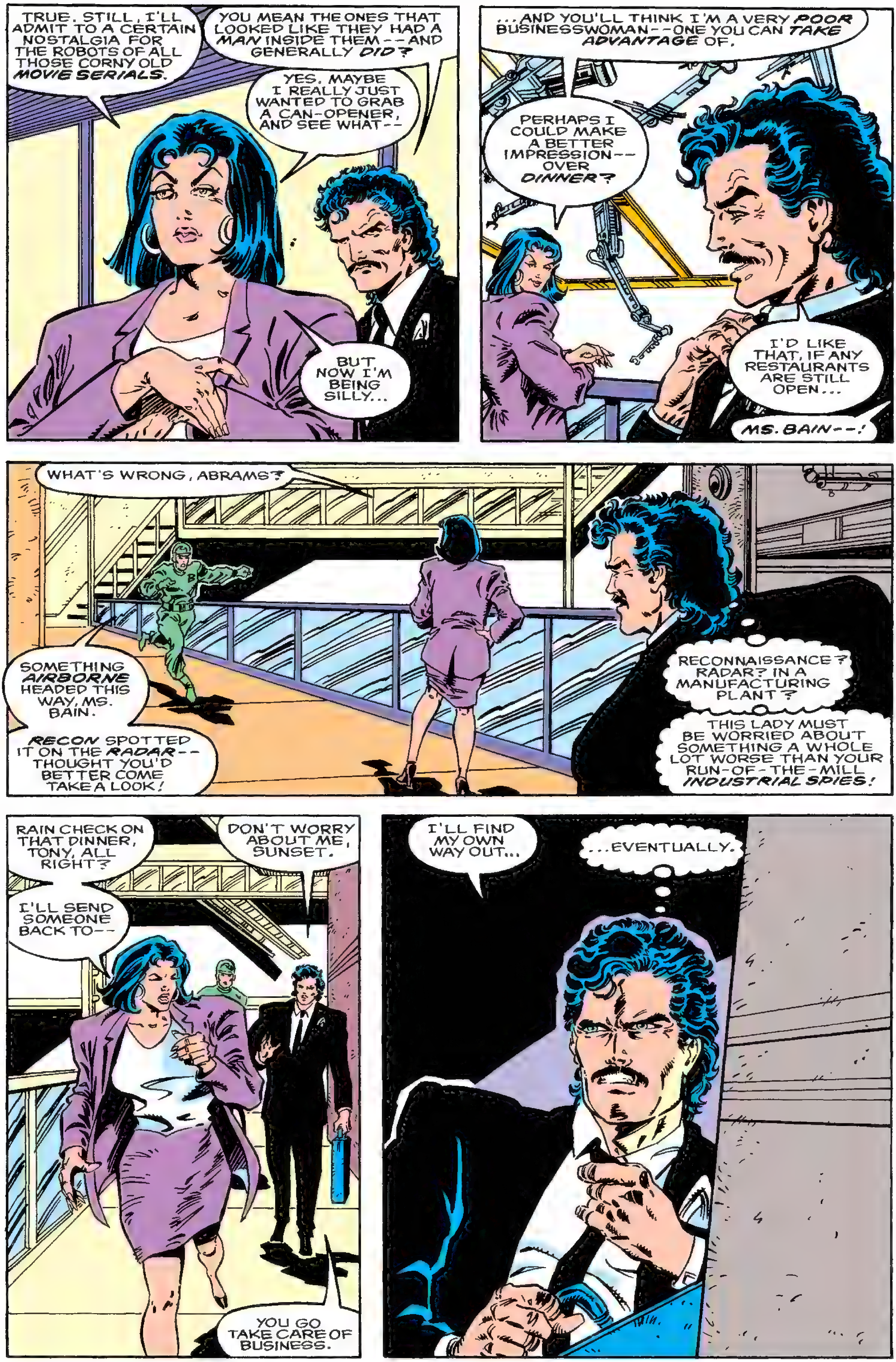
ROY & DANN THOMAS	TOM MORGAN	RANDY EMBERLIN	JANICE CHIANG	NEL YOMTOV	HOWARD MACKIE	TOM DeFALCO
WRITERS	PENCILER	INKER	LETTERER	COLORIST	EDITOR	CHIEF

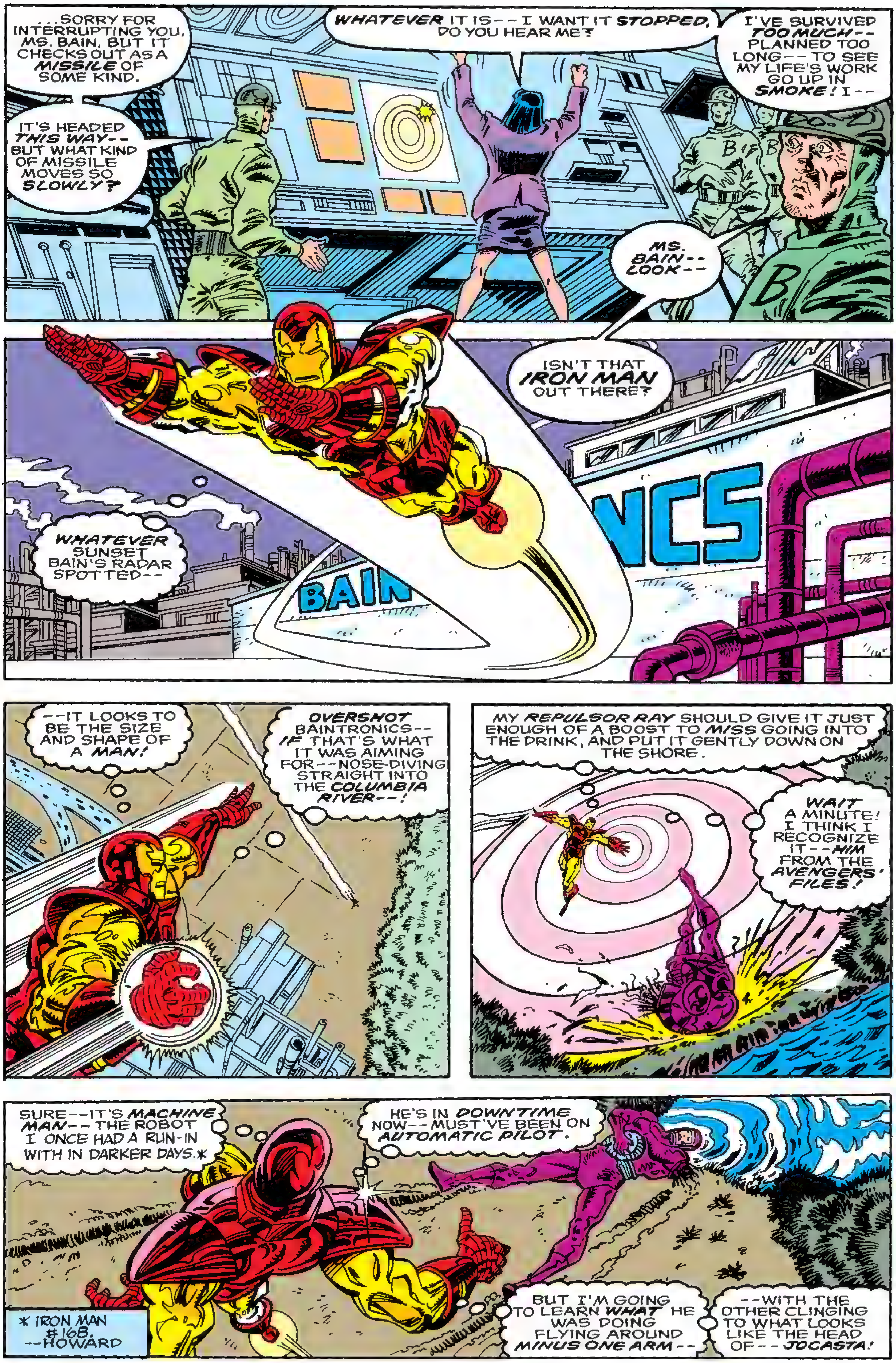

WHATEVER GARVIN MAY THINK OF ME--I'M NOT ONE TO RUN AWAY WHILE SOMEONE ELSE NOBLY GUARDS MY BACKSIDE!
WHO'S BEING NOBLE? I'LL BE HARD PRESSED TO GUARD MY OWN!
SPLANG
MY 850 POUNDS DIDN'T EXACTLY FLATTEN THE INTRUDER--
PTAK
PTAK
PTAK
--ANY MORE THAN THE MODIFIED .357 MAGNUM BUILT INTO MY FORE-FINGER!
THE MINIATURE FLAME-THROWER GEARS PUT BACK INTO MY KNUCKLES ISN'T STOPPING IT, EITHER!
FOOOSH
THEN I'D BETTER USE MY EXTENSIONS TO TRY TO KEEP OUR VISITOR AT ARM'S LENGTH.
GRRAARR
LOOK OUT! IT'S ALMOST ON TOP OF YOU!
ARE YOU STILL BACK THERE, SPAULDING?
THUDD
NOW, FOR THE LAST TIME-- GET OUT BEFORE IT--
OH NO! IT SNAPPED AARON'S ARM IN TWO LIKE A ROTTED TWIG--
RRRRRR
--AND NOW IT'S GOING TO WORK ON THE REST OF HIM!
ZZATCH!
PRAISE HEAVEN HE CAN'T FEEL PHYSICAL PAIN, BUT STILL--
WAIT! NOW WHAT'S THAT ERECTOR-SET MONSTROSITY UP TO?
AARON'S ARM--
--IT'S BITING INTO IT!
TCHOMP

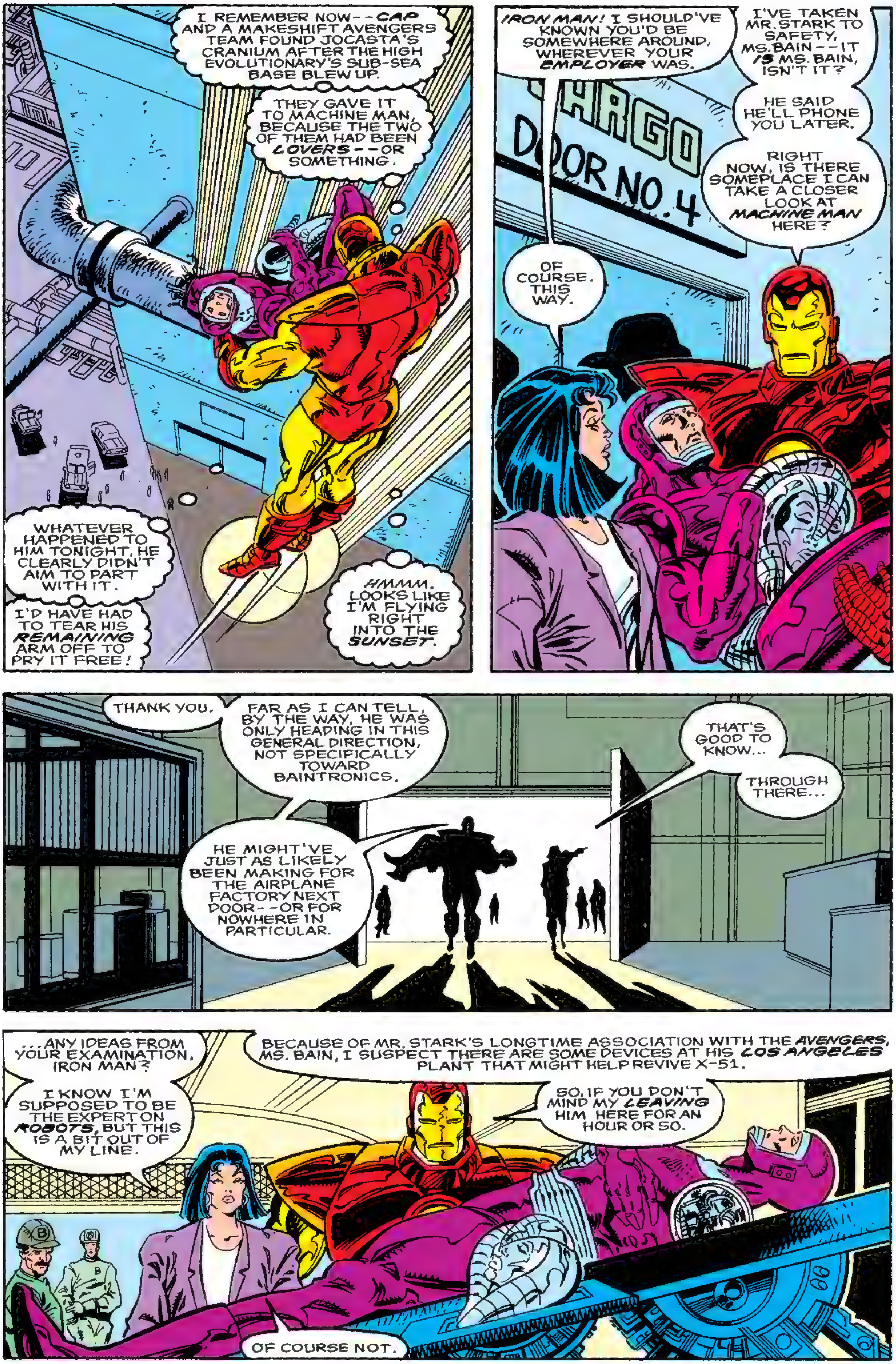

--CHEWING IT--
KRUNCH KRUNCH
--ABSORBING IT, SOMEHOW--
--TITANIUM-ALLOY SKIN AND ALL!
THAT DEVIL DID AARON SO MUCH DAMAGE--HE'S GONE INTO SOME SORT OF ROBOTIC SHOCK.
KRUNCH KRUNCH
IT'S IGNORING ME. NO INTEREST IN HUMAN FLESH, I GUESS.
BUT I'M BETTING IT'LL BE ALL OVER AARON THE SECOND IT FINISHES HIS ARM!
GOT TO GET HIM OUT OF HERE SOMEHO--
WAIT! HIS SOLE-JETS!
IF I CAN JUST ACTIVATE THEM MANUALLY, BEFORE THAT MONSTER--
--SEES ME--!
TITANIUM
TITANIUM
WHOOOOOOSSH
I DID IT!
HE'S OUT OF HERE--
--AND HE MANAGED TO TAKE JOCASTA'S HEAD WITH HIM!

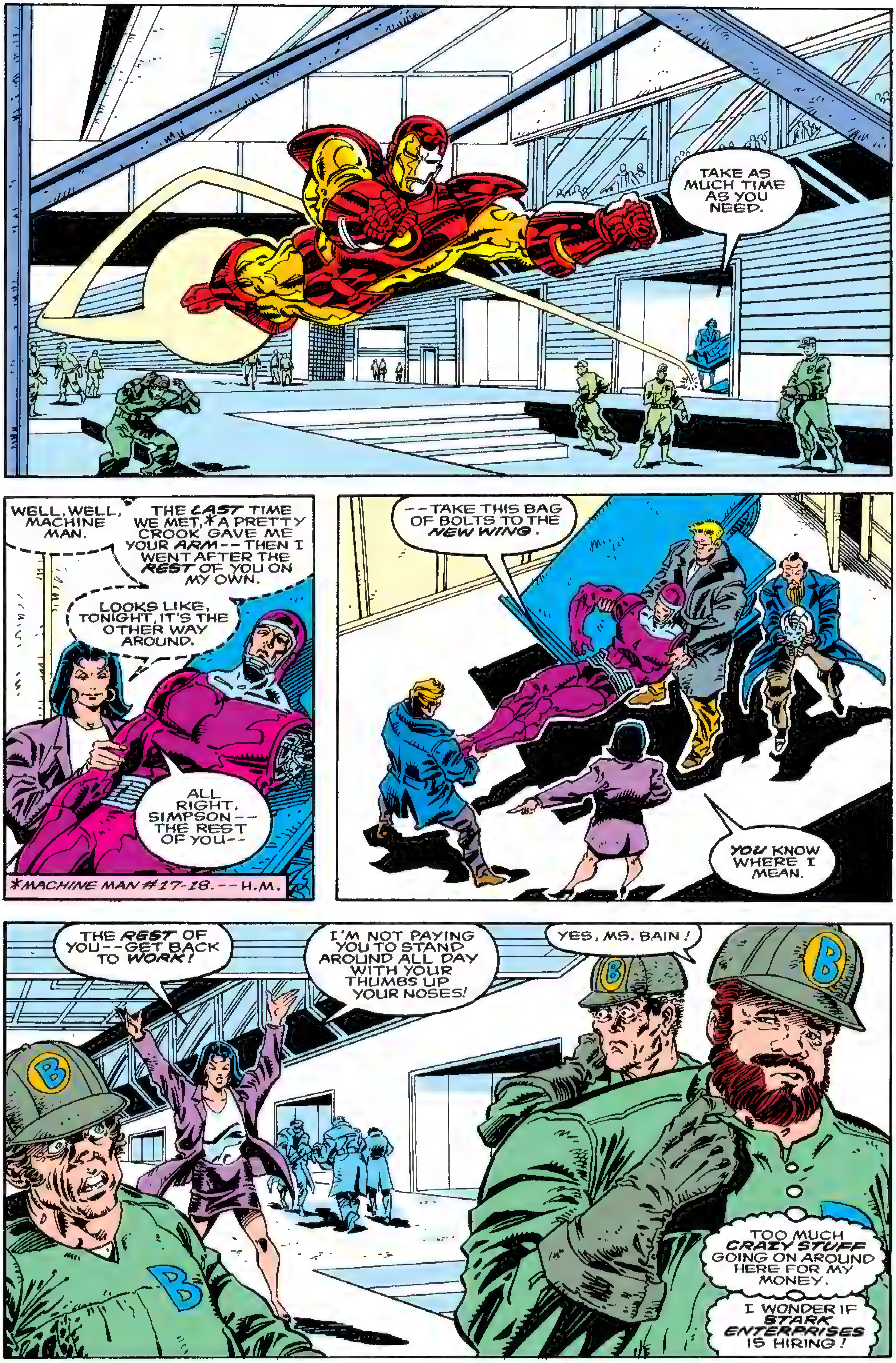
BUT WHY WOULD HE THINK THE INTRUDER WOULD WANT *THAT*, UNLESS--?
OF COURSE! *IT*'S MADE OF THE SAME BASIC METAL AS *AARON'S ARM!*
HE FIGURES IF THAT THING CAN *"EAT"* TITANIUM, WHAT'S LEFT OF JOCASTA MIGHT WELL BE NEXT!
HERE, TIN MAN! *CHEW ON THIS!*
JUST DON'T GO AFTER *AARON*-- PLEASE!
KLANNG
TITANIUM
HE WAS RIGHT!
IT *TURNED* WHEN I ROLLED THAT CONTAINER OF A LIQUID *TITANIUM COMPOUND* NEAR IT!
NOW IF ONLY IT STAYS *DISTRACTED*, FOR A FEW MORE SECONDS--
TITANIUM
--LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO--
NO!
HELP ME, SOMEBODY--
HELP MEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE
SNAPP!

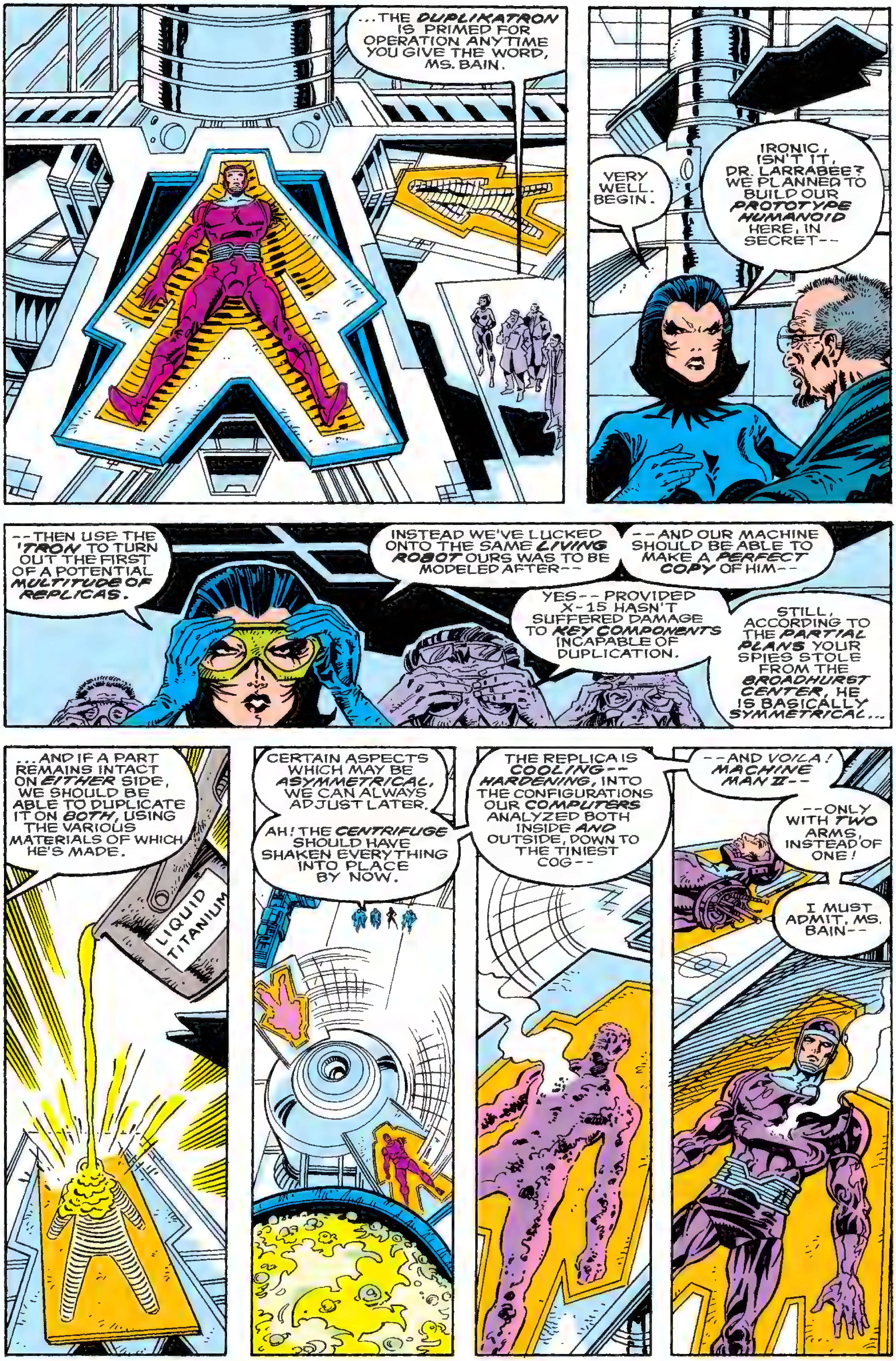

I'VE GOT TO *HAND* IT TO YOU, MS. BAIN...
...YOU PULLED A REAL *COUP*, LOCATING YOUR NEW COMPANY RIGHT NEXT TO SEATTLE'S BIGGEST *AIRCRAFT FACTORY*.
I BELIEVE IN LETTING PEOPLE KNOW I'M *AROUND*, MR. STARK.
AND I INTEND FOR *BAINTRONICS, INC.* TO BE AROUND FOR A LONG, LONG TIME.
BY THE WAY, I KNOW YOU DROPPED BY TO DISCUSS FUTURE POSSIBLE DEALINGS BETWEEN BAINTRONICS AND YOUR OWN *PROSTHETICS* DIVISION...
BAINTRONICS INC
...BUT SURELY WE CAN MAKE IT *"TONY"* AND *"SUNSET"*?
NO PROBLEM. I'M GLAD I HAPPENED TO HAVE SOME OTHER BUSINESS IN THE CENTRAL PART OF THE STATE.*
HOPE YOU WON'T MIND MY ASKING--IS "SUNSET" YOUR GIVEN NAME?
YES. GIVEN BY *ME*... TO *MYSELF*.
I'M *VERY* MUCH A SELF-MADE WOMAN, TONY.
**SEE CAPTAIN AMERICA ANNUAL, NOW ON SALE. --HOWARD*
BUT IT'S MY NEW LINE OF *ROBOTICS* YOU CAME TO SEE, NOT *SUNSET BAIN*.
VOILA! A FEW OF MY INTRODUCTORY MODELS.
NOT EXACTLY *C3PO* AND *ROBBY THE ROBOT*, OF COURSE.
SURELY WE'RE PAST THE POINT WHERE WE THINK MACHINES SHOULD RESEMBLE THEIR HUMAN MAKERS.

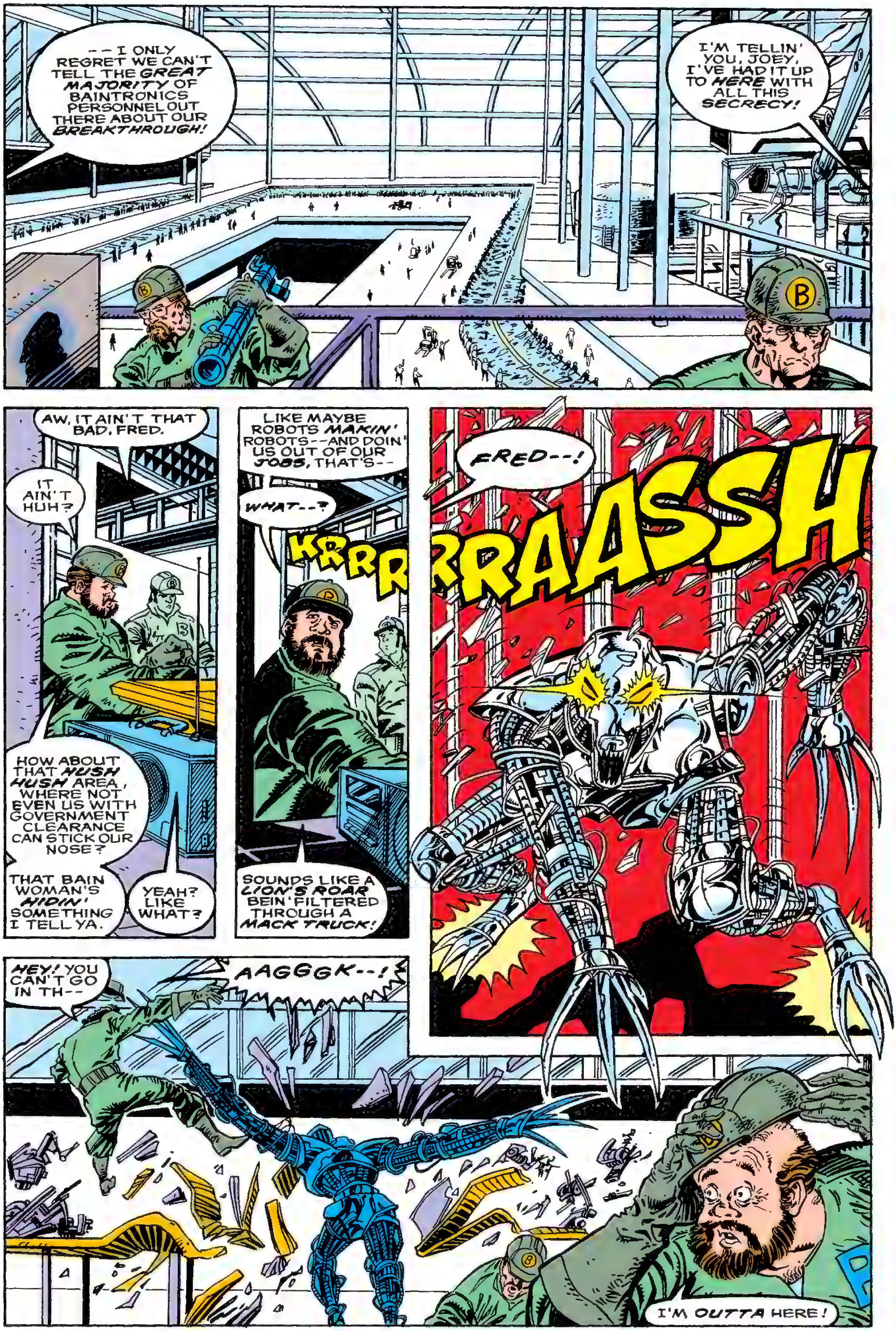

TRUE. STILL, I'LL ADMIT TO A CERTAIN NOSTALGIA FOR THE ROBOTS OF ALL THOSE CORNY OLD *MOVIE SERIALS*.
YOU MEAN THE ONES THAT LOOKED LIKE THEY HAD A *MAN* INSIDE THEM--AND GENERALLY *DID*?
YES. MAYBE I REALLY JUST WANTED TO GRAB A CAN-OPENER, AND SEE WHAT--
BUT NOW I'M BEING SILLY...
...AND YOU'LL THINK I'M A VERY *POOR* BUSINESSWOMAN--ONE YOU CAN *TAKE ADVANTAGE* OF.
PERHAPS I COULD MAKE A BETTER IMPRESSION--OVER *DINNER*?
I'D LIKE THAT, IF ANY RESTAURANTS ARE STILL OPEN...
MS. BAIN--!
WHAT'S WRONG, ABRAMS?
SOMETHING *AIRBORNE* HEADED THIS WAY, MS. BAIN.
RECON SPOTTED IT ON THE *RADAR*--THOUGHT YOU'D BETTER COME TAKE A LOOK!
RECONNAISSANCE? RADAR? IN A MANUFACTURING PLANT?
THIS LADY MUST BE WORRIED ABOUT SOMETHING A WHOLE LOT WORSE THAN YOUR RUN-OF-THE-MILL *INDUSTRIAL SPIES!*
RAIN CHECK ON THAT DINNER, TONY, ALL RIGHT?
I'LL SEND SOMEONE BACK TO--
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME, SUNSET.
YOU GO TAKE CARE OF BUSINESS.
I'LL FIND MY OWN WAY OUT...
...EVENTUALLY.

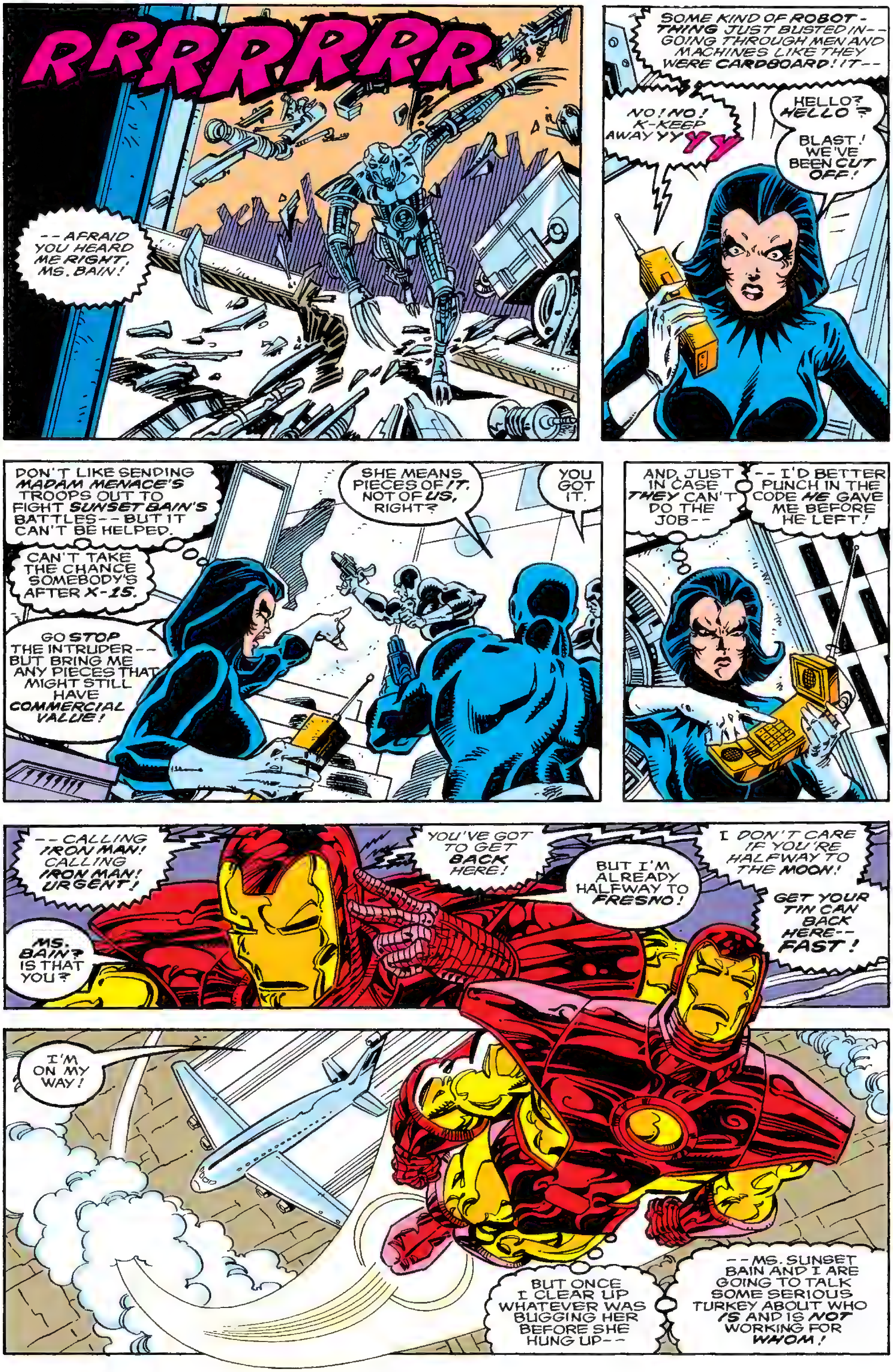

...SORRY FOR INTERRUPTING YOU, MS. BAIN, BUT IT CHECKS OUT AS A *MISSILE* OF SOME KIND.
IT'S HEADED *THIS WAY*-- BUT WHAT KIND OF MISSILE MOVES SO *SLOWLY?*
WHATEVER IT IS-- I WANT IT *STOPPED*, DO YOU HEAR ME?
I'VE SURVIVED *TOO MUCH*-- PLANNED TOO LONG-- TO SEE MY LIFE'S WORK GO UP IN *SMOKE!* I--
MS. BAIN-- LOOK--
ISN'T THAT *IRON MAN* OUT THERE?
WHATEVER SUNSET BAIN'S RADAR SPOTTED--
BAIN
NCS
--IT LOOKS TO BE THE SIZE AND SHAPE OF A *MAN!*
OVERSHOT BAINTRONICS-- *IF* THAT'S WHAT IT WAS AIMING FOR-- NOSE-DIVING STRAIGHT INTO THE *COLUMBIA RIVER*--!
MY *REPULSOR RAY* SHOULD GIVE IT JUST ENOUGH OF A BOOST TO *MISS* GOING INTO THE DRINK, AND PUT IT GENTLY DOWN ON THE SHORE.
WAIT A MINUTE! I THINK I RECOGNIZE IT-- *HIM* FROM THE *AVENGERS' FILES!*
SURE--IT'S *MACHINE MAN*-- THE ROBOT I ONCE HAD A RUN-IN WITH IN DARKER DAYS.*
HE'S IN *DOWNTIME* NOW-- MUST'VE BEEN ON *AUTOMATIC PILOT*.
BUT I'M GOING TO LEARN *WHAT* HE WAS DOING FLYING AROUND *MINUS ONE ARM*--
--WITH THE OTHER CLINGING TO WHAT LOOKS LIKE THE HEAD OF-- *JOCASTA!*
* IRON MAN #168. --HOWARD

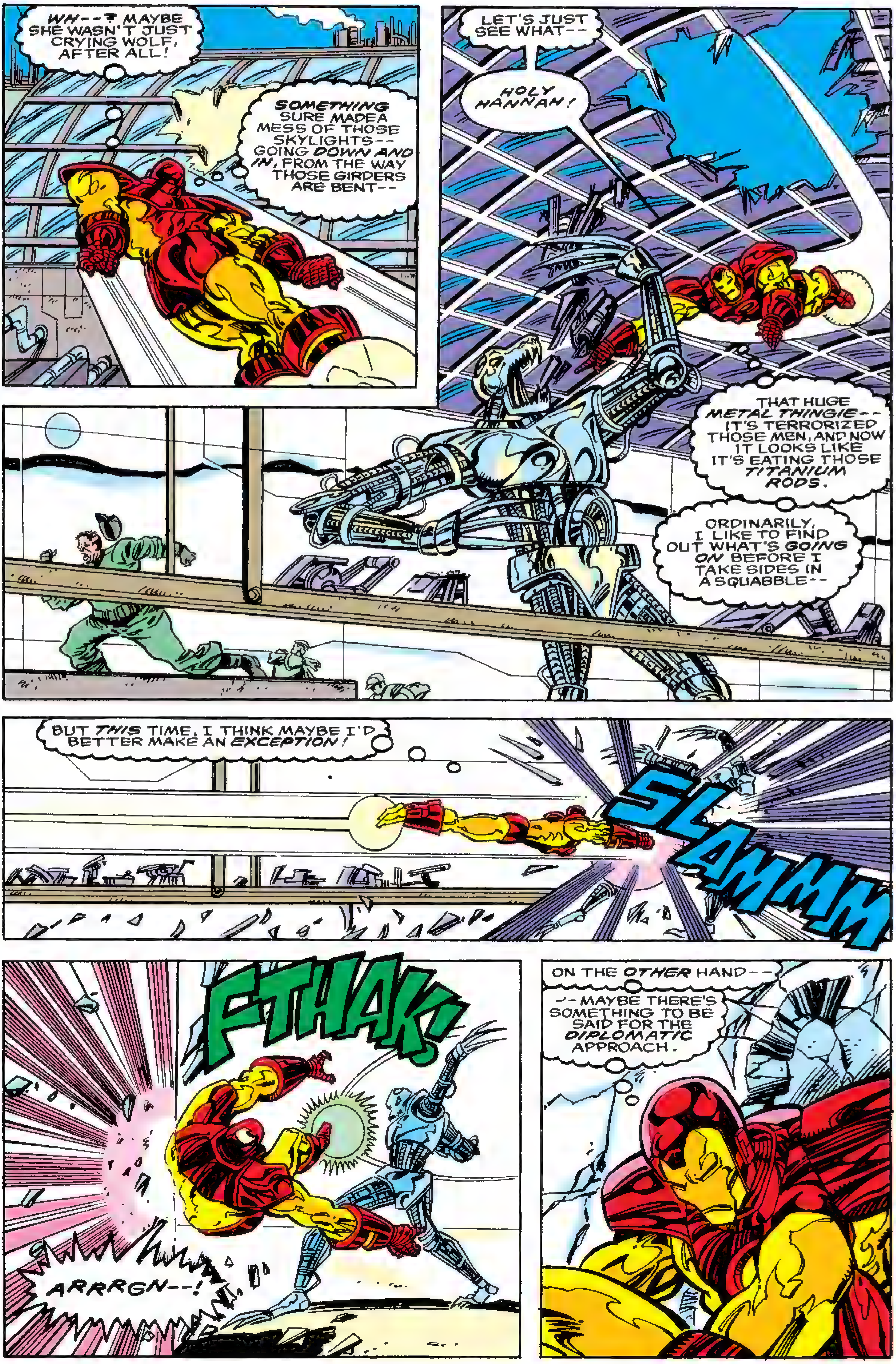

I REMEMBER NOW--CAP AND A MAKESHIFT AVENGERS TEAM FOUND JOCASTA'S CRANIUM AFTER THE HIGH EVOLUTIONARY'S SUB-SEA BASE BLEW UP.
THEY GAVE IT TO MACHINE MAN, BECAUSE THE TWO OF THEM HAD BEEN LOVERS--OR SOMETHING.
WHATEVER HAPPENED TO HIM TONIGHT, HE CLEARLY DIDN'T AIM TO PART WITH IT.
I'D HAVE HAD TO TEAR HIS REMAINING ARM OFF TO PRY IT FREE!
HMMMM. LOOKS LIKE I'M FLYING RIGHT INTO THE SUNSET.
IRON MAN! I SHOULD'VE KNOWN YOU'D BE SOMEWHERE AROUND, WHEREVER YOUR EMPLOYER WAS.
I'VE TAKEN MR. STARK TO SAFETY, MS. BAIN--IT IS MS. BAIN, ISN'T IT?
HE SAID HE'LL PHONE YOU LATER.
RIGHT NOW, IS THERE SOMEPLACE I CAN TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT MACHINE MAN HERE?
CARGO DOOR NO. 4
OF COURSE. THIS WAY.
THANK YOU.
FAR AS I CAN TELL, BY THE WAY, HE WAS ONLY HEADING IN THIS GENERAL DIRECTION, NOT SPECIFICALLY TOWARD BAINTRONICS.
HE MIGHT'VE JUST AS LIKELY BEEN MAKING FOR THE AIRPLANE FACTORY NEXT DOOR--OR FOR NOWHERE IN PARTICULAR.
THAT'S GOOD TO KNOW...
THROUGH THERE...
...ANY IDEAS FROM YOUR EXAMINATION, IRON MAN?
I KNOW I'M SUPPOSED TO BE THE EXPERT ON ROBOTS, BUT THIS IS A BIT OUT OF MY LINE.
BECAUSE OF MR. STARK'S LONGTIME ASSOCIATION WITH THE AVENGERS, MS. BAIN, I SUSPECT THERE ARE SOME DEVICES AT HIS LOS ANGELES PLANT THAT MIGHT HELP REVIVE X-51.
SO, IF YOU DON'T MIND MY LEAVING HIM HERE FOR AN HOUR OR SO.
OF COURSE NOT.


TAKE AS MUCH TIME AS YOU NEED.
WELL, WELL, MACHINE MAN.
THE *LAST* TIME WE MET,* A PRETTY CROOK GAVE ME YOUR *ARM*-- THEN I WENT AFTER THE *REST* OF YOU ON MY OWN.
LOOKS LIKE, TONIGHT, IT'S THE OTHER WAY AROUND.
ALL RIGHT, SIMPSON-- THE REST OF YOU--
*MACHINE MAN #17-18.--H.M.
--TAKE THIS BAG OF BOLTS TO THE *NEW WING*.
YOU KNOW WHERE I MEAN.
THE *REST* OF YOU--GET BACK TO *WORK!*
I'M NOT PAYING YOU TO STAND AROUND ALL DAY WITH YOUR THUMBS UP YOUR NOSES!
YES, MS. BAIN!
TOO MUCH *CRAZY STUFF* GOING ON AROUND HERE FOR MY MONEY.
I WONDER IF *STARK ENTERPRISES* IS HIRING!


...THE *DUPLIKATRON* IS PRIMED FOR OPERATION ANYTIME YOU GIVE THE WORD, MS. BAIN.
VERY WELL. BEGIN.
IRONIC, ISN'T IT, DR. LARRABEE? WE PLANNED TO BUILD OUR *PROTOTYPE HUMANOID* HERE, IN SECRET--
--THEN USE THE *'TRON* TO TURN OUT THE FIRST OF A POTENTIAL *MULTITUDE OF REPLICAS*.
INSTEAD WE'VE LUCKED ONTO THE SAME *LIVING ROBOT* OURS WAS TO BE MODELED AFTER--
--AND OUR MACHINE SHOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE A *PERFECT COPY* OF HIM--
YES--PROVIDED X-15 HASN'T SUFFERED DAMAGE TO *KEY COMPONENTS* INCAPABLE OF DUPLICATION.
STILL, ACCORDING TO THE *PARTIAL PLANS* YOUR SPIES STOLE FROM THE *BROADHURST CENTER*, HE IS BASICALLY *SYMMETRICAL*...
...AND IF A PART REMAINS INTACT ON *EITHER* SIDE, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO DUPLICATE IT ON *BOTH*, USING THE VARIOUS MATERIALS OF WHICH HE'S MADE.
LIQUID TITANIUM
CERTAIN ASPECTS WHICH MAY BE *ASYMMETRICAL*, WE CAN ALWAYS ADJUST LATER.
AH! THE *CENTRIFUGE* SHOULD HAVE SHAKEN EVERYTHING INTO PLACE BY NOW.
THE REPLICA IS *COOLING--HARDENING*, INTO THE CONFIGURATIONS OUR *COMPUTERS* ANALYZED BOTH INSIDE *AND* OUTSIDE, DOWN TO THE TINIEST COG--
--AND *VOILA! MACHINE MAN II*--
--ONLY WITH *TWO* ARMS, INSTEAD OF ONE!
I MUST ADMIT, MS. BAIN--

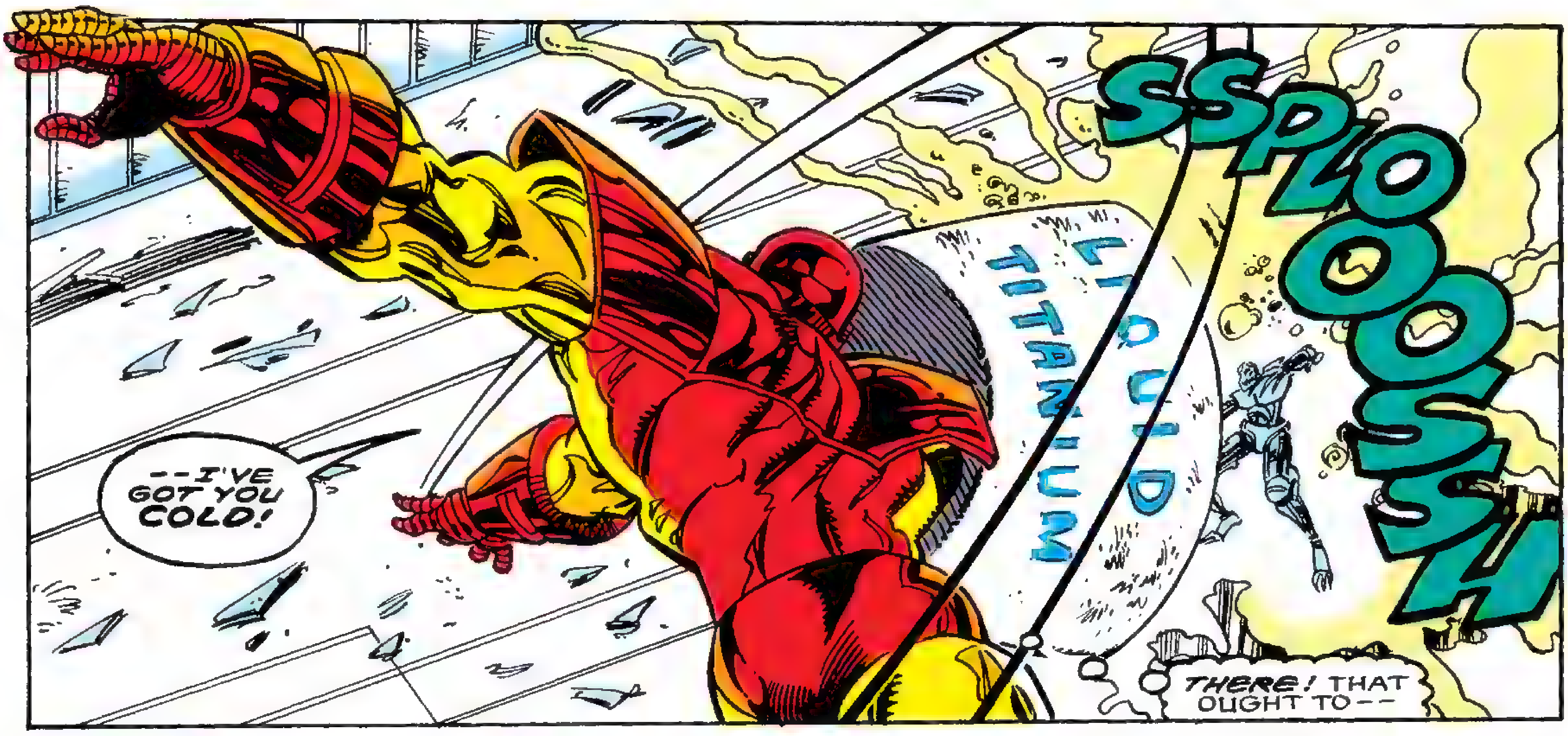

--I ONLY REGRET WE CAN'T TELL THE *GREAT MAJORITY* OF BAINTRONICS PERSONNEL OUT THERE ABOUT OUR *BREAKTHROUGH!*
I'M TELLIN' YOU, JOEY, I'VE HAD IT UP TO *HERE* WITH ALL THIS *SECRECY!*
AW, IT AIN'T THAT BAD, FRED.
IT AIN'T HUH?
HOW ABOUT THAT *HUSH HUSH* AREA, WHERE NOT EVEN US WITH GOVERNMENT CLEARANCE CAN STICK OUR NOSE?
THAT BAIN WOMAN'S *HIDIN'* SOMETHING I TELL YA.
YEAH? LIKE WHAT?
LIKE MAYBE ROBOTS *MAKIN'* ROBOTS--AND DOIN' US OUT OF OUR *JOBS*, THAT'S--
WHAT--?
SOUNDS LIKE A *LION'S ROAR* BEIN' FILTERED THROUGH A *MACK TRUCK!*
FRED--!
KRRRRRAASSH
HEY! YOU CAN'T GO IN TH--
AAGGGK--!
I'M *OUTTA* HERE!

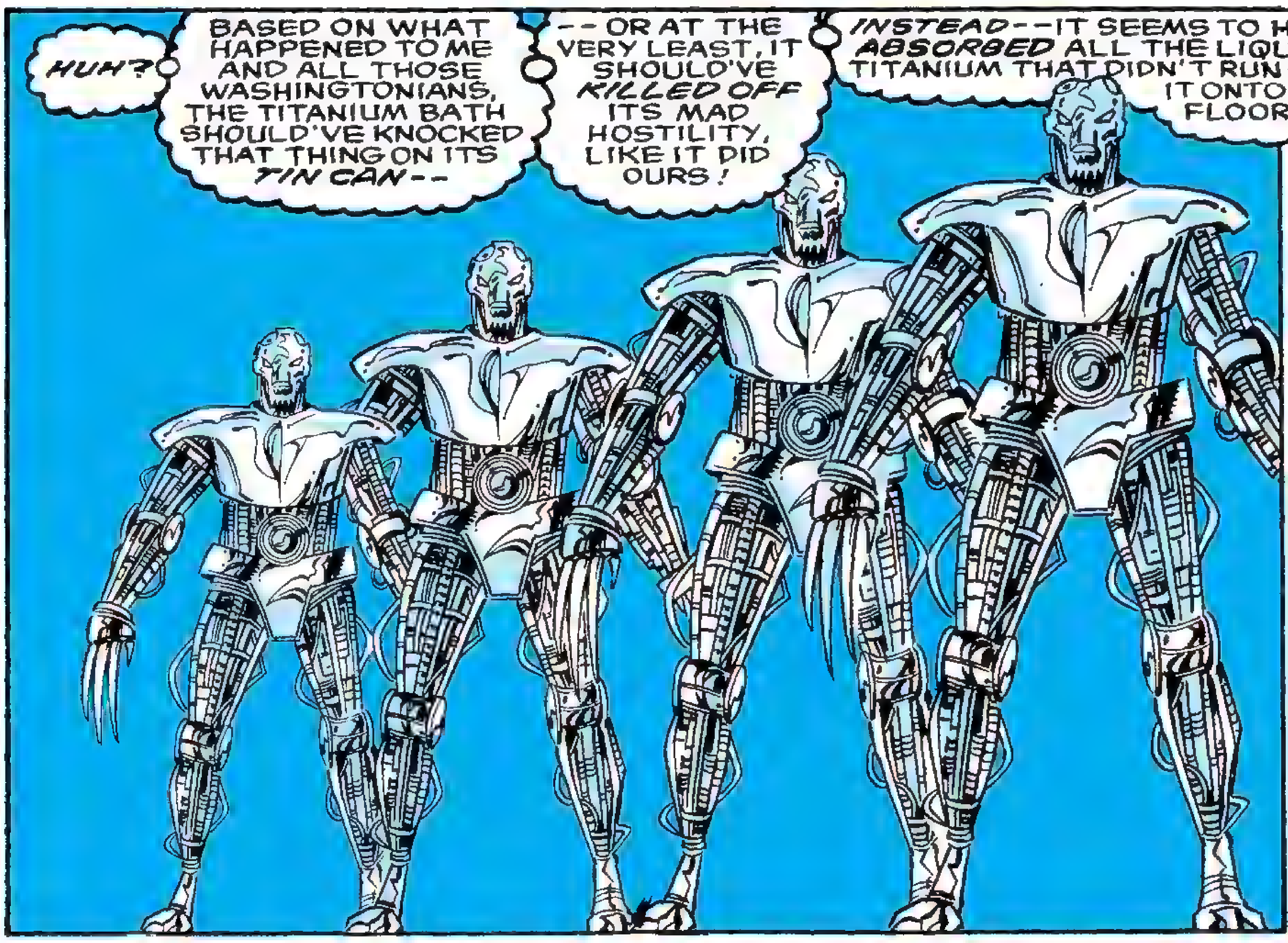

RRRRRRRR
--AFRAID YOU HEARD ME RIGHT, MS. BAIN!
SOME KIND OF ROBOT-THING JUST BUSTED IN--GOING THROUGH MEN AND MACHINES LIKE THEY WERE CARDBOARD! IT--
NO! NO! K-KEEP AWAYYYYY
HELLO? HELLO?
BLAST! WE'VE BEEN CUT OFF!
DON'T LIKE SENDING MADAM MENACE'S TROOPS OUT TO FIGHT SUNSET BAIN'S BATTLES--BUT IT CAN'T BE HELPED.
CAN'T TAKE THE CHANCE SOMEBODY'S AFTER X-15.
GO STOP THE INTRUDER--BUT BRING ME ANY PIECES THAT MIGHT STILL HAVE COMMERCIAL VALUE!
SHE MEANS PIECES OF IT, NOT OF US, RIGHT?
YOU GOT IT.
AND, JUST IN CASE THEY CAN'T DO THE JOB--
--I'D BETTER PUNCH IN THE CODE HE GAVE ME BEFORE HE LEFT!
--CALLING IRON MAN! CALLING IRON MAN! URGENT!
MS. BAIN? IS THAT YOU?
YOU'VE GOT TO GET BACK HERE!
BUT I'M ALREADY HALFWAY TO FRESNO!
I DON'T CARE IF YOU'RE HALFWAY TO THE MOON!
GET YOUR TIN CAN BACK HERE--FAST!
I'M ON MY WAY!
BUT ONCE I CLEAR UP WHATEVER WAS BUGGING HER BEFORE SHE HUNG UP--
--MS. SUNSET BAIN AND I ARE GOING TO TALK SOME SERIOUS TURKEY ABOUT WHO IS AND IS NOT WORKING FOR WHOM!

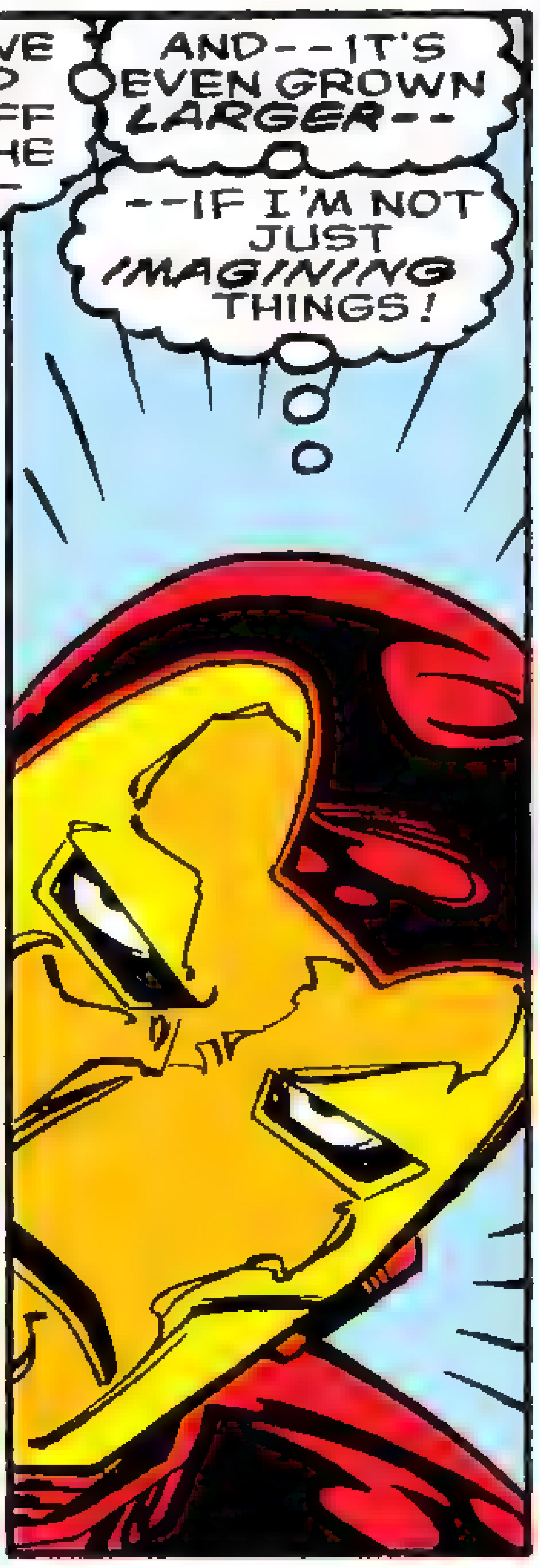

WH--? MAYBE SHE WASN'T JUST CRYING WOLF, AFTER ALL!
SOMETHING SURE MADE A MESS OF THOSE SKYLIGHTS-- GOING DOWN AND IN, FROM THE WAY THOSE GIRDERS ARE BENT--
LET'S JUST SEE WHAT--
HOLY HANNAH!
THAT HUGE METAL THINGIE-- IT'S TERRORIZED THOSE MEN, AND NOW IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S EATING THOSE TITANIUM RODS.
ORDINARILY, I LIKE TO FIND OUT WHAT'S GOING ON BEFORE I TAKE SIDES IN A SQUABBLE--
BUT THIS TIME, I THINK MAYBE I'D BETTER MAKE AN EXCEPTION!
SLAMMM
FTHAK!
ARRRGN--!
ON THE OTHER HAND--
--MAYBE THERE'S SOMETHING TO BE SAID FOR THE DIPLOMATIC APPROACH.

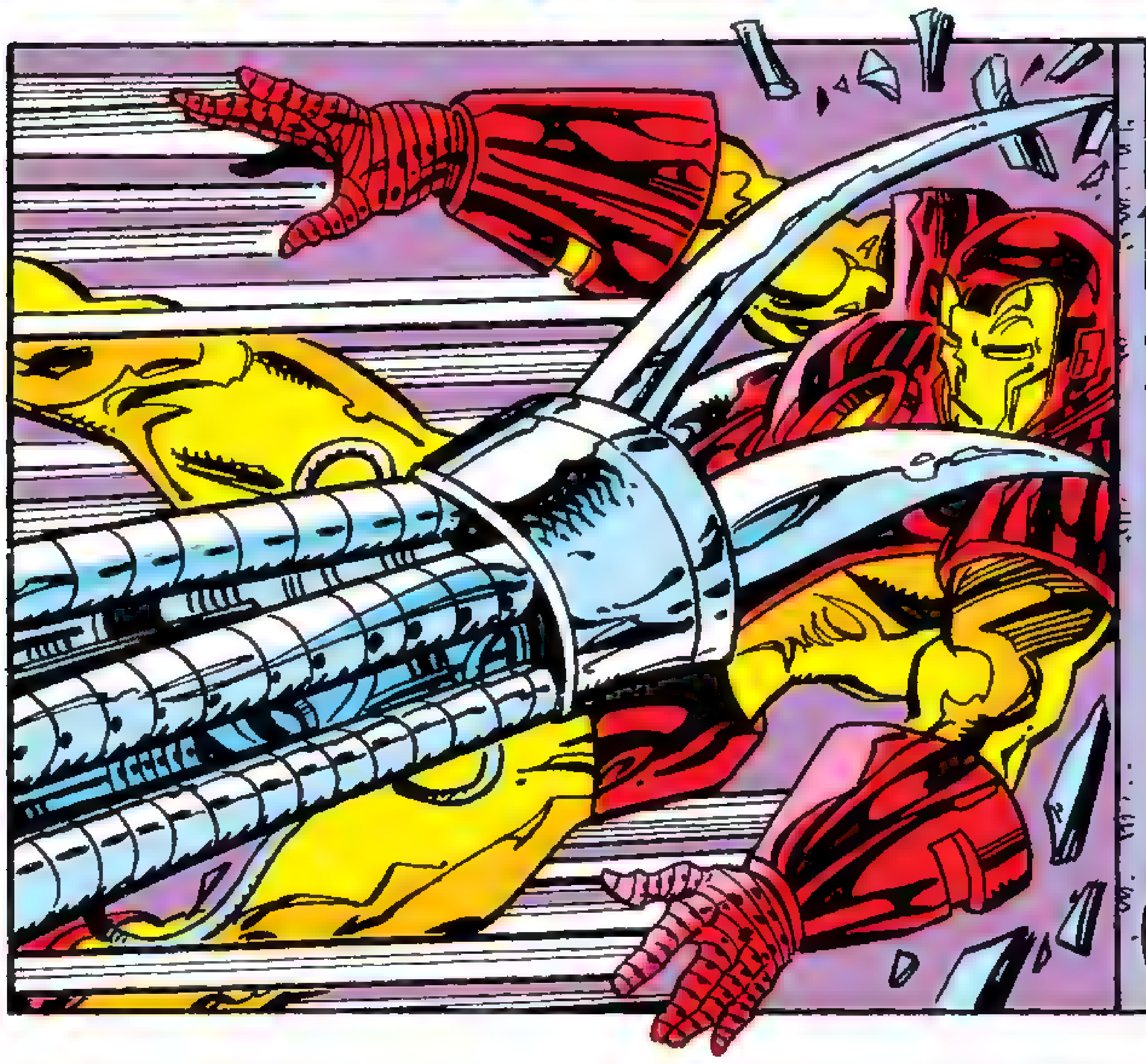
WEIRD-LOOKING JOB.
WONDER IF IT'S GOT ANY CONNECTION WITH MACHINE MAN.
OKAY, STEELY DAN--
--NOW SUPPOSE YOU TELL ME WHAT BRINGS YOU TO BAINTRONICS IN 25 WHIRRS OR LESS!
IRON MAN HAS RETURNED! QUICKLY!
WHATEVER IS HAPPENING OUT THERE, YOU MUST COMPLETE THE NEARLY-FINISHED PROCESS!
Y-YES, MS. BAIN.
NO TALKEE, HUH?
WHY AM I NOT SURPRISED?
AND FROM THAT KILLER GLEAM YOU'VE GOT IN YOUR EYE--
SHRAKK
--I'D SAY I'D BETTER REPULSE YOU AS MUCH AS YOU REPULSE ME!
WHAMM
UH-OH! THAT BABY'S EVEN HARDIER THAN IT LOOKS!
IT'S SCRAPING ITSELF OFF THE WALL--LIKE A SUPER-FLY OFF A CAR'S WINDSHIELD--
--AND IT'S HURTLING MY WAY! I'D BETTER--
KTHANG
THAT--HURT!
BUT--AS IT CAME TOWARD ME--I GOT ANOTHER LOOK AT ITS EYES.
SOMETHING--FAMILIAR ABOUT--

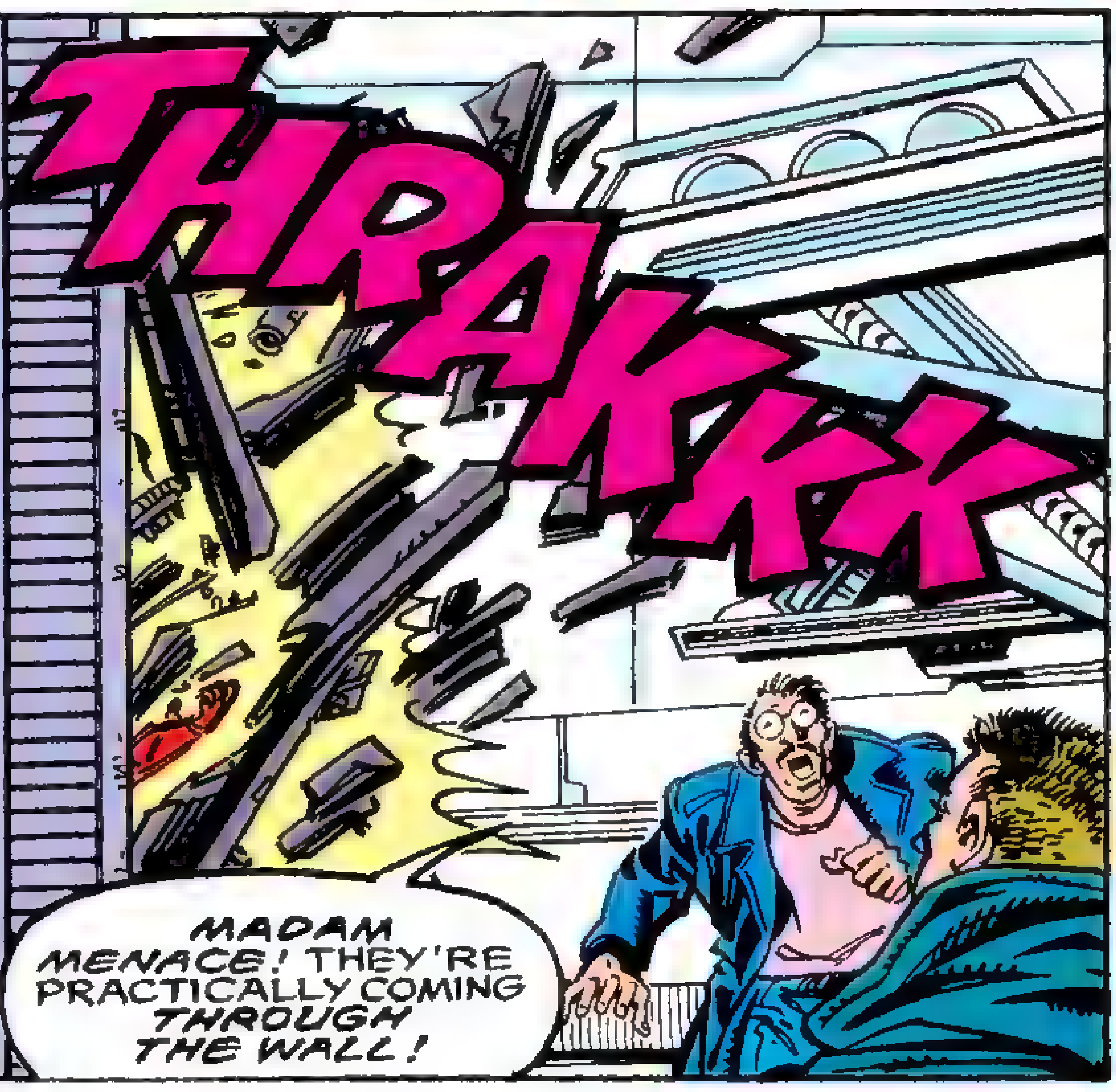
--IT'S EYES!
SURE! THAT'S IT!
THE WHOLE TOWN OF GEORGEVILLE, WASHINGTON, HAD THAT SAME GLAZED LOOK--AND SO DID I, ACCORDING TO CAPTAIN AMERICA--
--WHEN WE WENT BERSERK AFTER EATING FISH TAINTED WITH THAT GLOWING SUBSTANCE THAT HAD SHOT OUT OF A NEW VOLCANO!
BUT--WHY DOES A NAME ECHO IN MY BRAIN--AS IF THOSE EYES ARE SOMEHOW BURNING IT INTO MY MIND?
THE NAME--TERMINUS!
I NEVER EVEN MET THAT METAL MONSTROSI--
KTWANG
SO MUCH FOR PHILOSOPHICAL INTROSPECTION!
WHAT I NEED RIGHT NOW IS A WAY TO WASTE THAT THING, BEFORE IT WASTES ME.
CAP MANAGED TO KILL WHATEVER IT WAS THAT GOT INTO US BY GETTING IT NICE AND COLD!
LIQUID ITANIUM
IF THIS SPECIMEN'S RELATED TO THE SAME SOURCE, THAT SHOULD WORK ON IT, TOO...
...AND THIS STUFF, WHICH IS SO COLD IT'D FREEZE MY HANDS INTO BRITTLE CRYSTALS IF NOT FOR MY METAL GLOVES, SHOULD FILL THE BILL!
LIQUID ITANIUM
ALL RIGHT, LITTLE TERMINUS, OR WHATEVER YOU ARE--

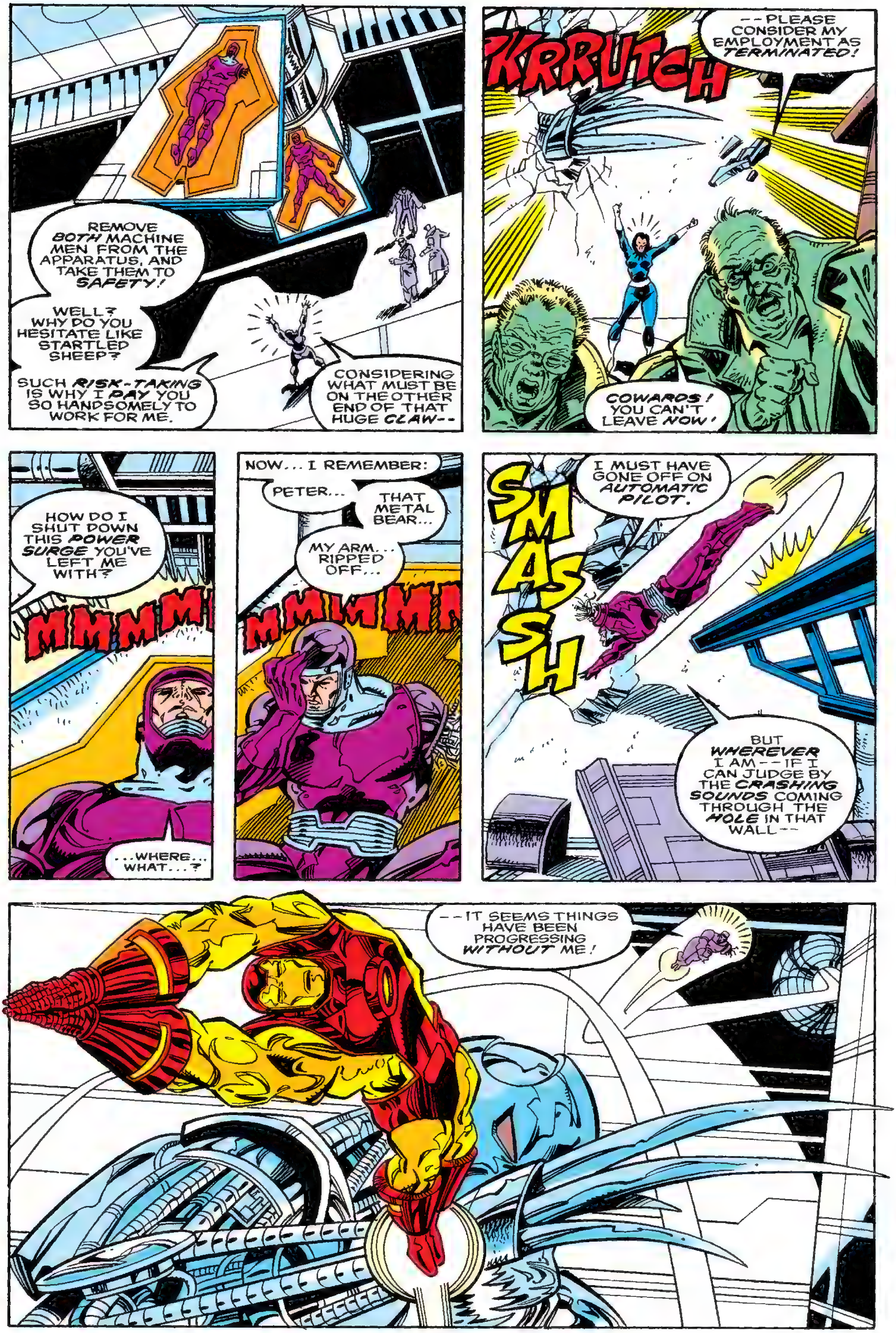

SSPLOOOSHH
LIQUID TITANIUM
--I'VE GOT YOU COLD!
THERE! THAT OUGHT TO--

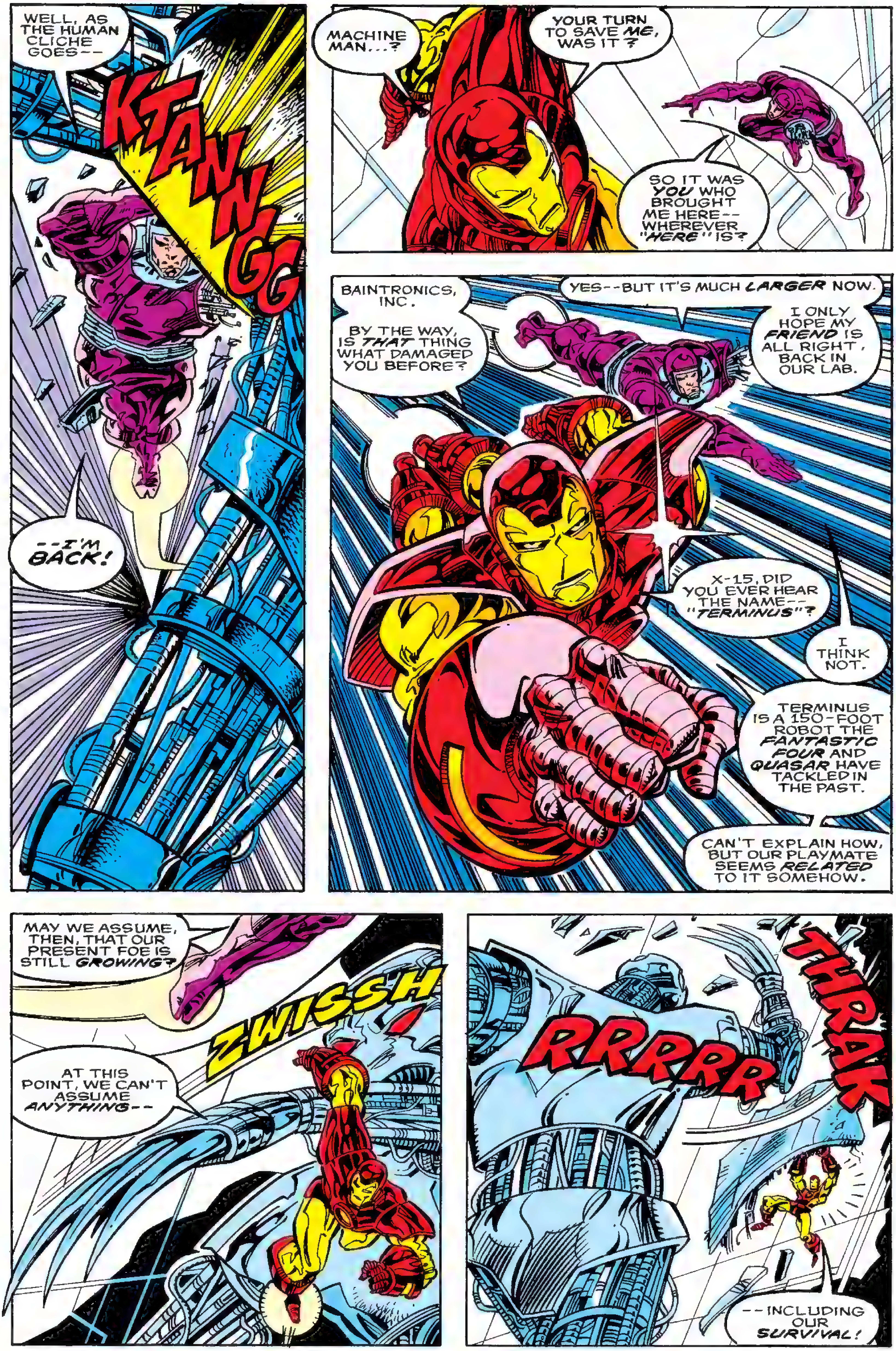

HUH?
BASED ON WHAT HAPPENED TO ME AND ALL THOSE WASHINGTONIANS, THE TITANIUM BATH SHOULD'VE KNOCKED THAT THING ON ITS TIN CAN--
--OR AT THE VERY LEAST, IT SHOULD'VE KILLED OFF ITS MAD HOSTILITY, LIKE IT DID OURS!
INSTEAD--IT SEEMS TO HAVE ABSORBED ALL THE LIQUID TITANIUM THAT DIDN'T RUN OFF IT ONTO THE FLOOR--


AND--IT'S EVEN GROWN LARGER--
--IF I'M NOT JUST IMAGINING THINGS!

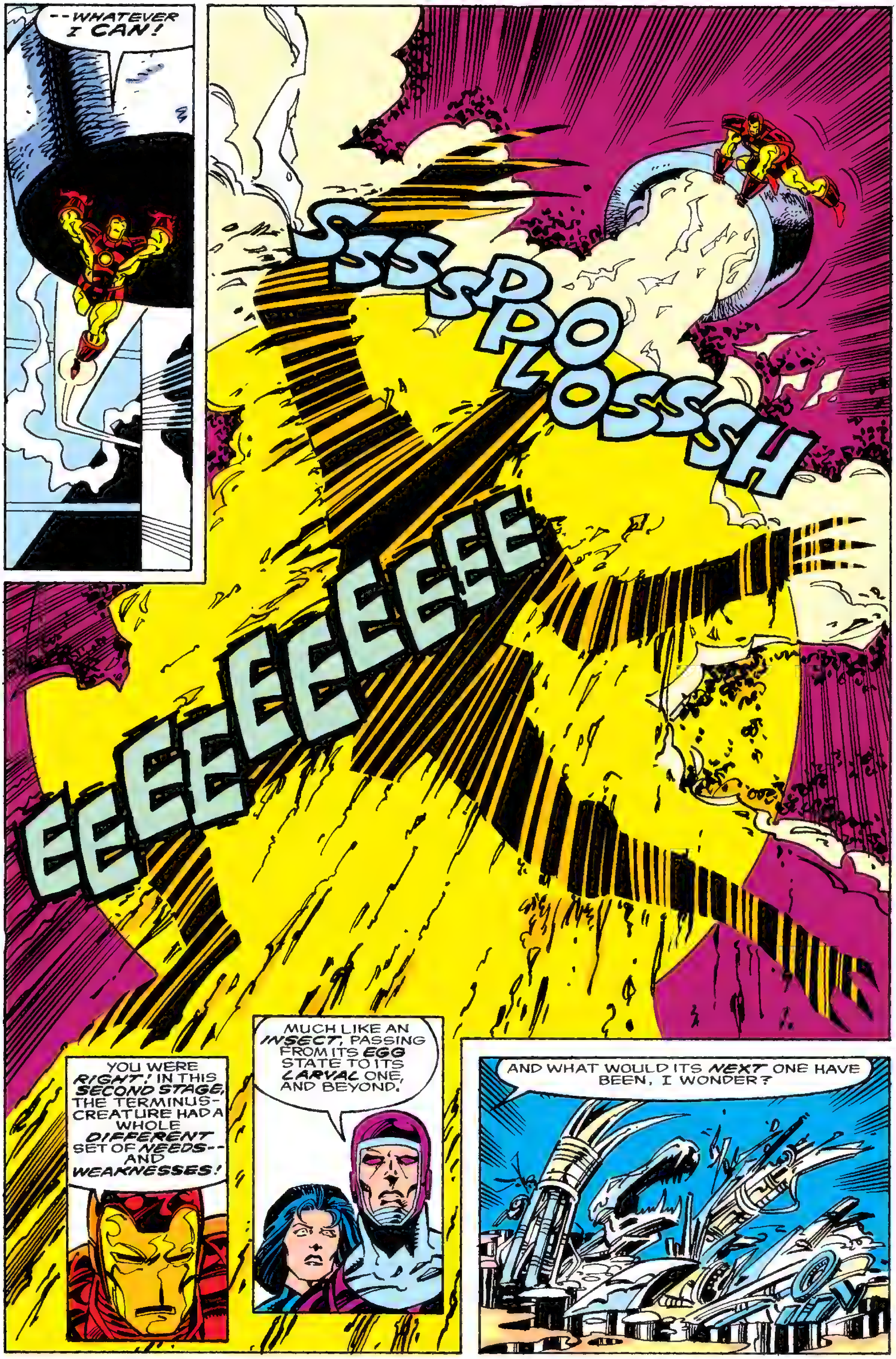


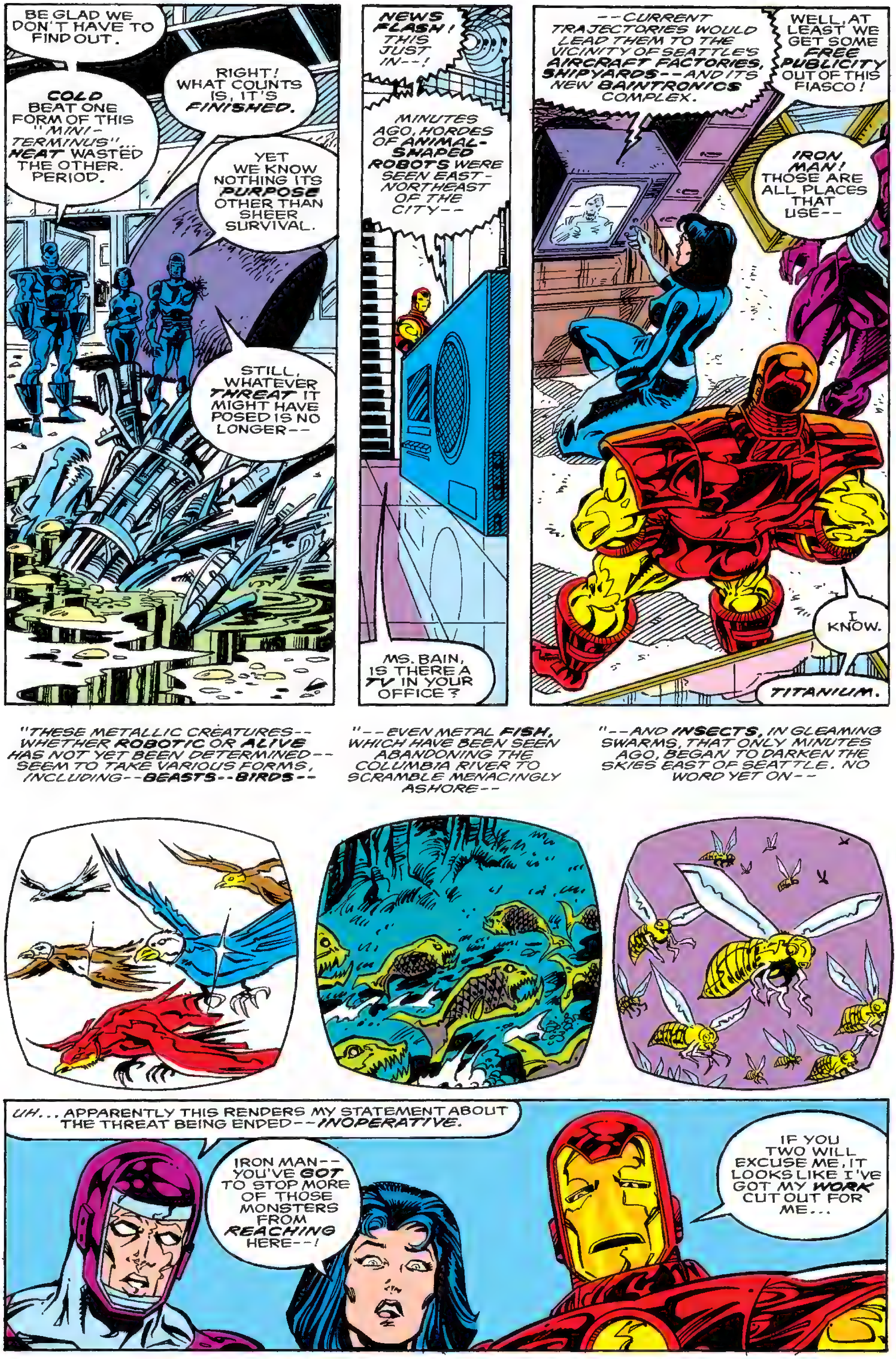

THRAKKK
MADAM MENACE! THEY'RE PRACTICALLY COMING THROUGH THE WALL!

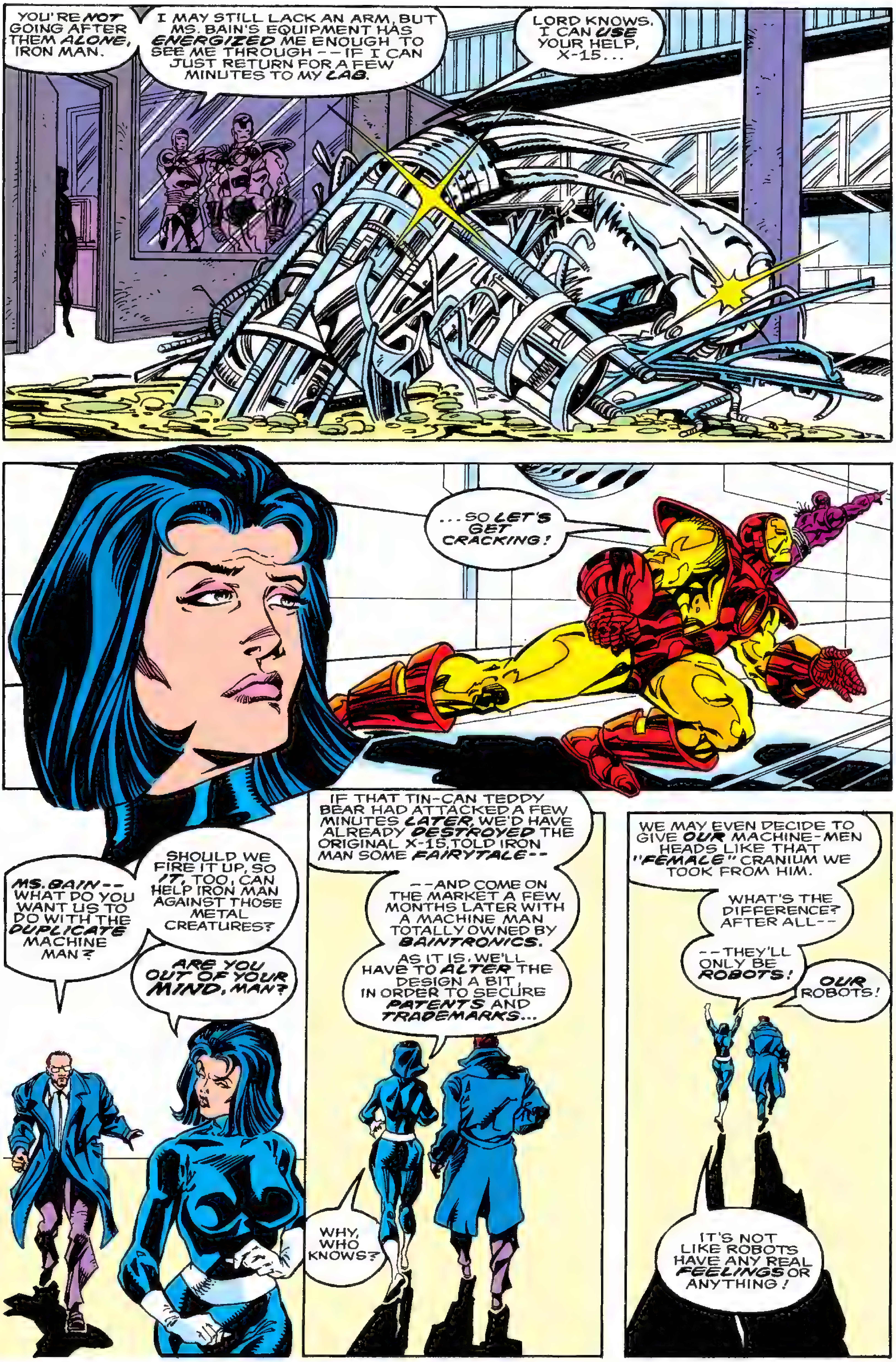

REMOVE *BOTH* MACHINE MEN FROM THE APPARATUS, AND TAKE THEM TO *SAFETY!*
WELL? WHY DO YOU HESITATE LIKE STARTLED SHEEP?
SUCH *RISK-TAKING* IS WHY I *PAY* YOU SO HANDSOMELY TO WORK FOR ME.
CONSIDERING WHAT MUST BE ON THE OTHER END OF THAT HUGE *CLAW--*
KRRUTCH
--PLEASE CONSIDER MY EMPLOYMENT AS *TERMINATED!*
COWARDS! YOU CAN'T LEAVE *NOW!*
HOW DO I SHUT DOWN THIS *POWER SURGE* YOU'VE LEFT ME WITH?
MMMMM
...WHERE... WHAT...?
NOW... I REMEMBER:
PETER...
THAT METAL BEAR...
MY ARM... RIPPED OFF...
MMMMM
SMASH
I MUST HAVE GONE OFF ON *AUTOMATIC PILOT.*
BUT *WHEREVER* I AM--IF I CAN JUDGE BY THE *CRASHING SOUNDS* COMING THROUGH THE *HOLE* IN THAT WALL--
--IT SEEMS THINGS HAVE BEEN PROGRESSING *WITHOUT* ME!

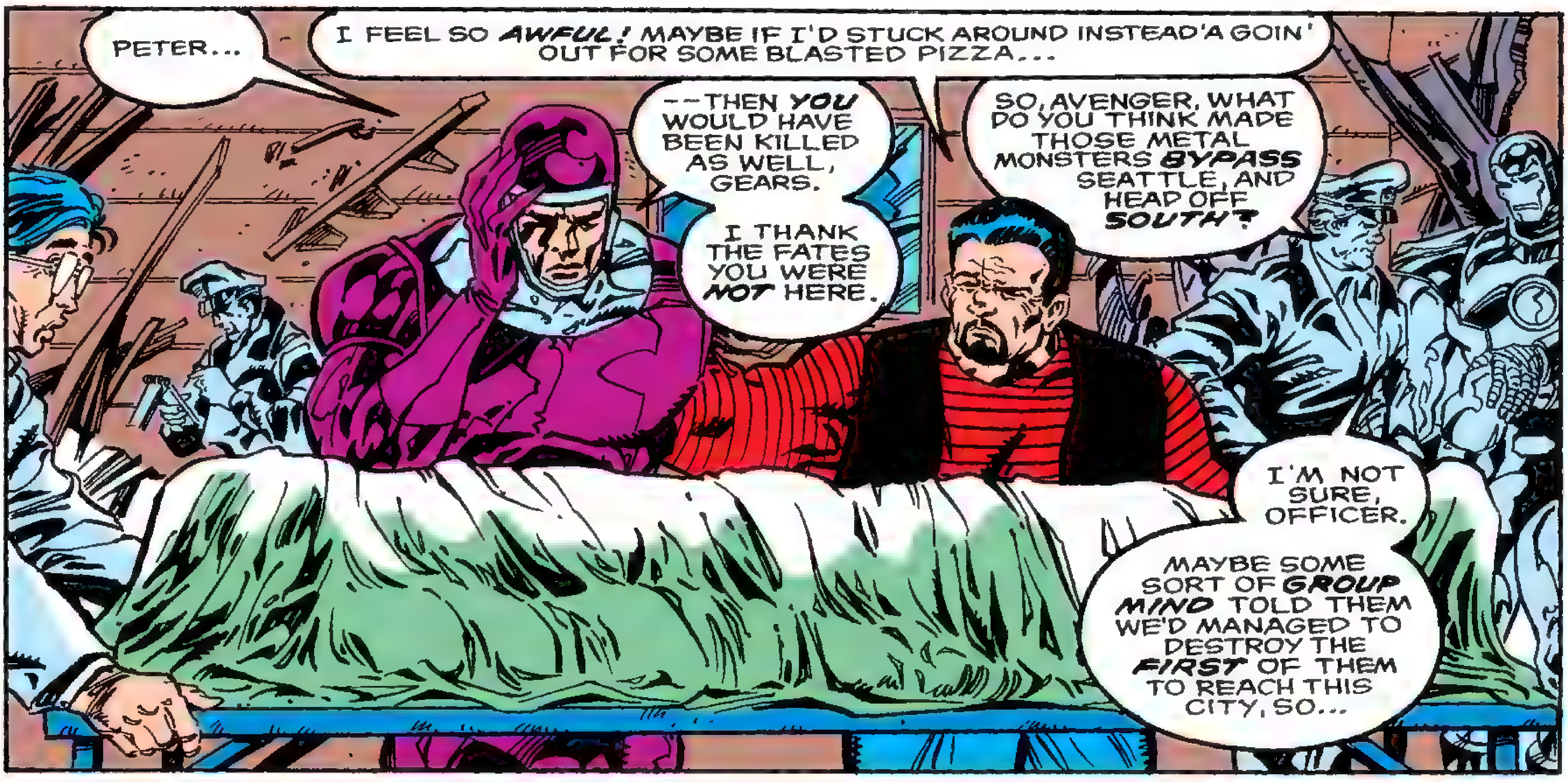

WELL, AS THE HUMAN CLICHE GOES--
KTANNGG
--I'M BACK!
MACHINE MAN...?
YOUR TURN TO SAVE *ME*, WAS IT?
SO IT WAS *YOU* WHO BROUGHT ME HERE--WHEREVER "*HERE*" IS?
BAINTRONICS, INC.
BY THE WAY, IS *THAT* THING WHAT DAMAGED YOU BEFORE?
YES--BUT IT'S MUCH *LARGER* NOW.
I ONLY HOPE MY *FRIEND* IS ALL RIGHT, BACK IN OUR LAB.
X-15, DID YOU EVER HEAR THE NAME--"*TERMINUS*"?
I THINK NOT.
TERMINUS IS A 150-FOOT ROBOT THE *FANTASTIC FOUR* AND *QUASAR* HAVE TACKLED IN THE PAST.
CAN'T EXPLAIN HOW, BUT OUR PLAYMATE SEEMS *RELATED* TO IT SOMEHOW.
MAY WE ASSUME, THEN, THAT OUR PRESENT FOE IS STILL *GROWING*?
ZWISSH
AT THIS POINT, WE CAN'T ASSUME *ANYTHING*--
RRRRRR
THRAK
--INCLUDING OUR *SURVIVAL*!

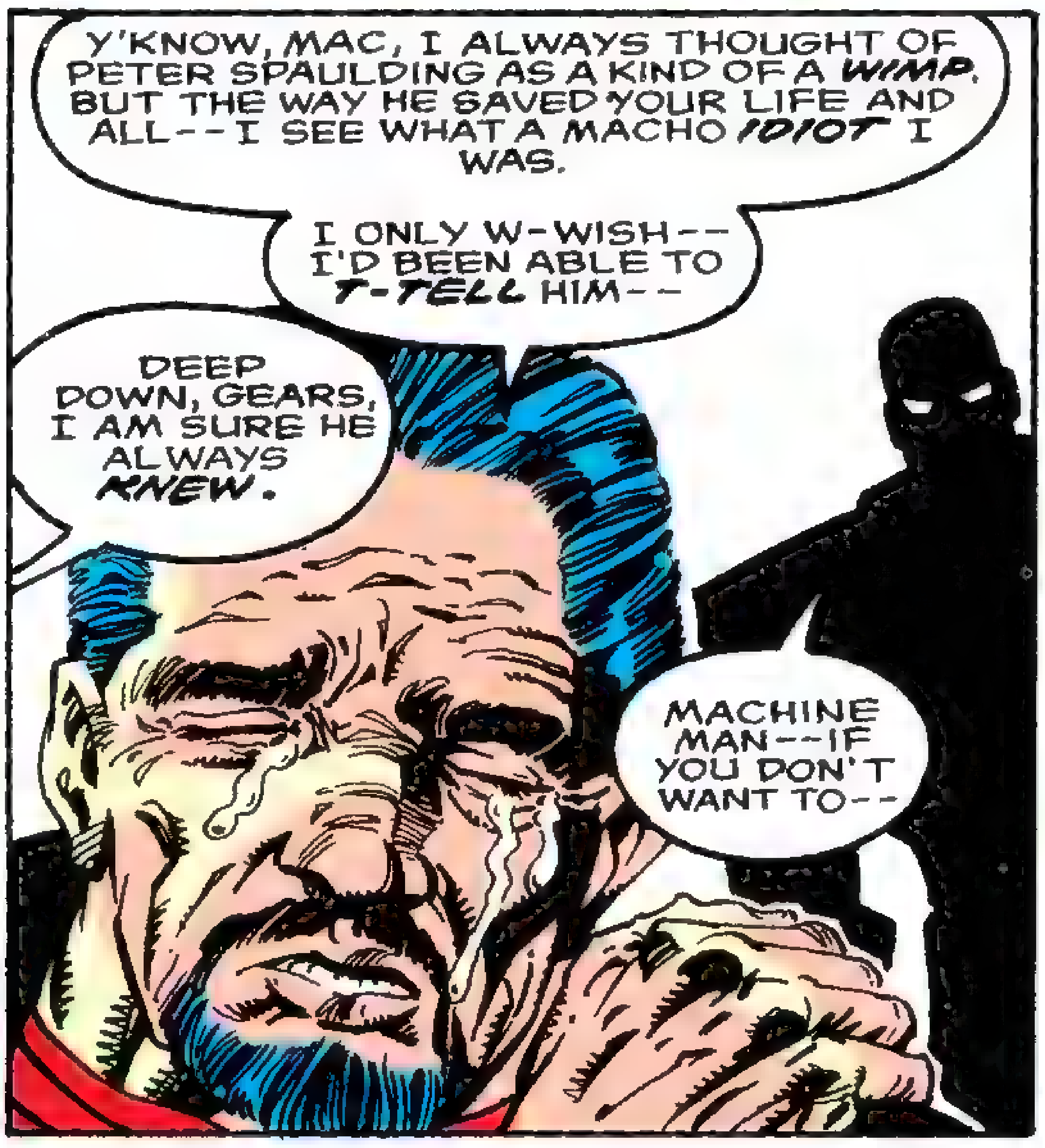
WHEN IT ASSAULTED *ME*, IT HAD THE FORM OF A *BEAR*, FUR AND ALL--AS IF IT HAD ONCE BEEN A *TRUE* BEAST.
ZZATCH
MAYBE IT *WAS*.
SOME EARLIER "*MICROBE*" VERSION TOOK OVER *MY* MIND--THROUGH SOME *FISH* I ATE.
MAYBE A *BEAR* ATE SOME OF THOSE FISH--AND THIS THING *GREW* INSIDE IT--TILL THERE WAS NOTHING *LEFT* OF THE BEAR.
'COURSE, THAT DOESN'T EXPLAIN WHY *COLD* DOESN'T STOP IT, LIKE IT DID THE "*MICROBES*."
I DOUSED IT IN FRIGID *LIQUID TITANIUM*, AND IT--
--*DEVOURED* IT, CORRECT?
MUCH OF MY *LEFT ARM* WAS MADE OF A TITANIUM ALLOY.
HAVE YOU TRIED POURING *MOLTEN* METAL ON THE CREATURE?
WHY? IT WAS *COLD* THAT KILLED THE "*MICROBES*," NOT HEAT.
UNLESS YOU MEAN--
MS. BAIN! LOOK OUT!
LUCKY I DITCHED MY *MADAM MENACE* MASK A MINUTE AGO!
THOSE TWO ARMORED BOY SCOUTS *SPOTTED* ME--
--AND SO DID *JUNIOR* THERE!
NNOOOOOOOOOO
MS. *SUNSET BAIN*, I PRESUME--
--"FORTUNE 500" OWNER OF *BAINTRONICS, INC.*?
UH... R-RIGHT.
WHOMM
BUT--WHAT'S *IRON MAN* DOING WITH THAT VAT OF *HOT LIQUID METAL*?
WHATEVER--I CAN--LADY--*UNNNH!*--

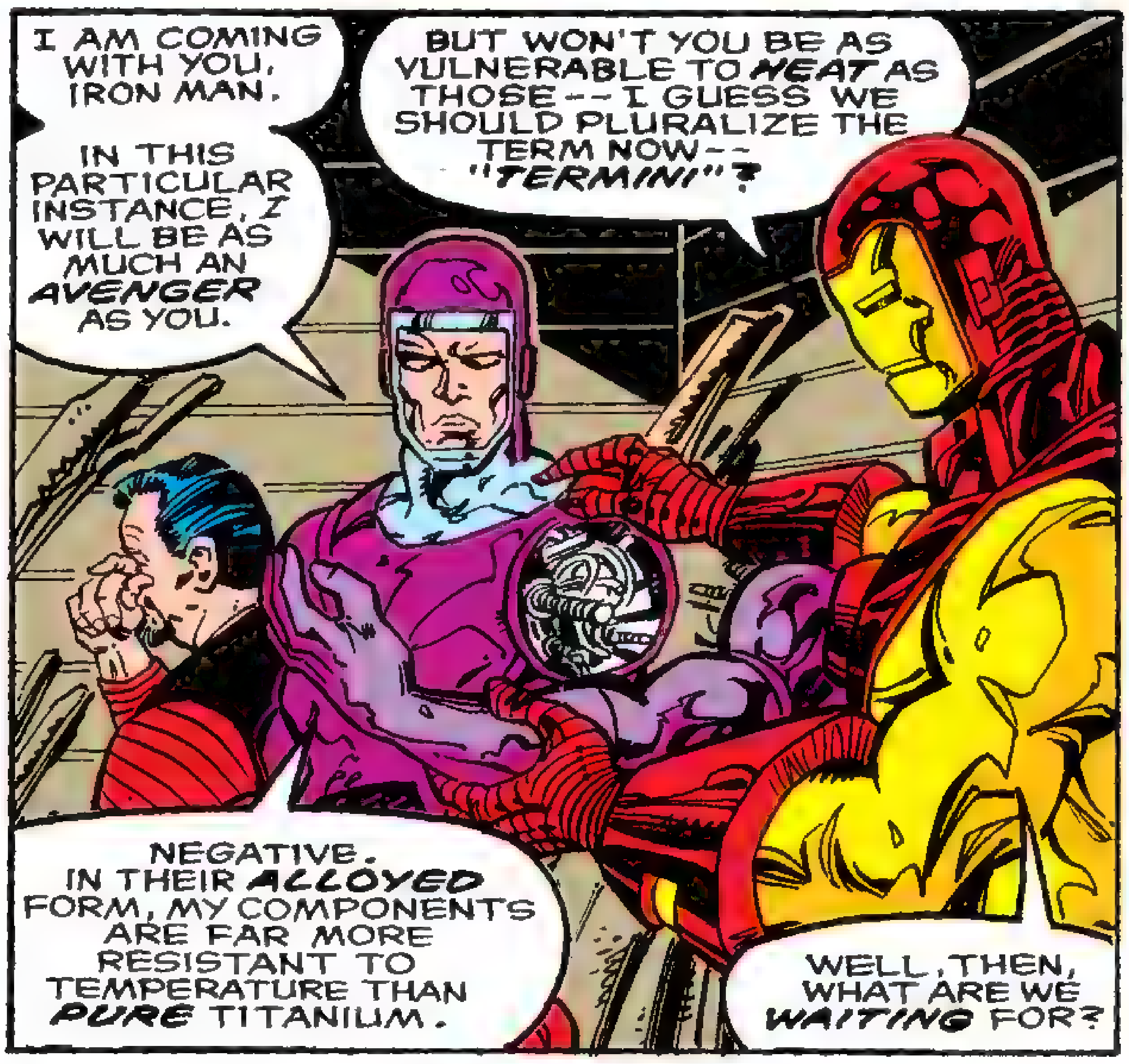

--WHATEVER I CAN!
SSSPOLOSSSH
EEEEEEEEEE
YOU WERE RIGHT! IN THIS SECOND STAGE, THE TERMINUS-CREATURE HAD A WHOLE DIFFERENT SET OF NEEDS--AND WEAKNESSES!
MUCH LIKE AN INSECT, PASSING FROM ITS EGG STATE TO ITS LARVAL ONE, AND BEYOND.
AND WHAT WOULD ITS NEXT ONE HAVE BEEN, I WONDER?

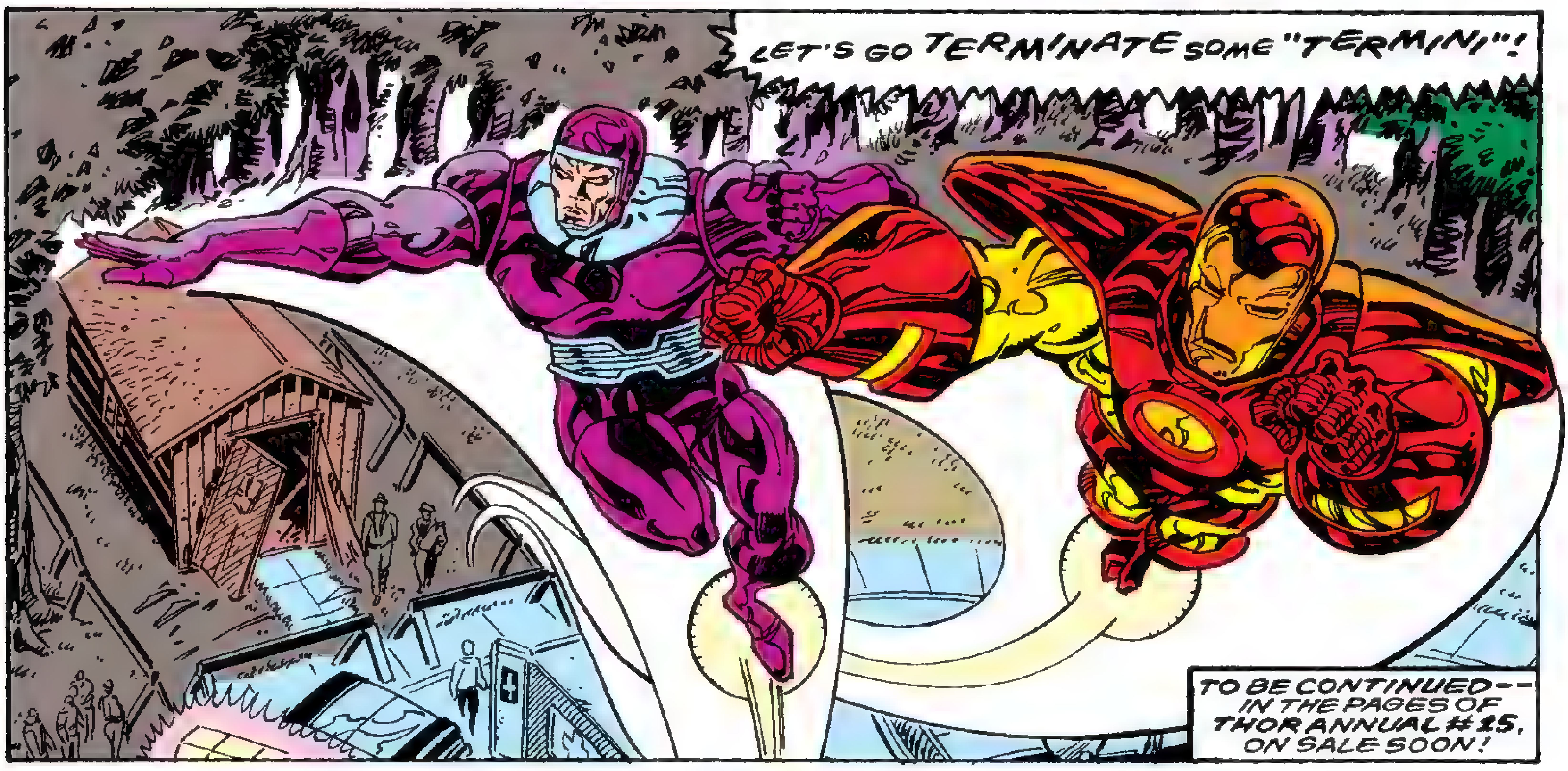

BE GLAD WE DON'T HAVE TO FIND OUT.
COLD BEAT ONE FORM OF THIS "MINI-TERMINUS"... HEAT WASTED THE OTHER. PERIOD.
RIGHT! WHAT COUNTS IS, IT'S FINISHED.
YET WE KNOW NOTHING ITS PURPOSE OTHER THAN SHEER SURVIVAL.
STILL, WHATEVER THREAT IT MIGHT HAVE POSED IS NO LONGER--
NEWS FLASH! THIS JUST IN--!
MINUTES AGO, HORDES OF ANIMAL-SHAPED ROBOTS WERE SEEN EAST-NORTHEAST OF THE CITY--
MS. BAIN, IS THERE A TV IN YOUR OFFICE?
--CURRENT TRAJECTORIES WOULD LEAD THEM TO THE VICINITY OF SEATTLE'S AIRCRAFT FACTORIES, SHIPYARDS--AND ITS NEW BAINTRONICS COMPLEX.
WELL, AT LEAST WE GET SOME FREE PUBLICITY OUT OF THIS FIASCO!
IRON MAN! THOSE ARE ALL PLACES THAT USE--
I KNOW.
TITANIUM.
"THESE METALLIC CREATURES--WHETHER ROBOTIC OR ALIVE HAS NOT YET BEEN DETERMINED--SEEM TO TAKE VARIOUS FORMS, INCLUDING--BEASTS--BIRDS--
"--EVEN METAL FISH, WHICH HAVE BEEN SEEN ABANDONING THE COLUMBIA RIVER TO SCRAMBLE MENACINGLY ASHORE--
"--AND INSECTS, IN GLEAMING SWARMS, THAT ONLY MINUTES AGO, BEGAN TO DARKEN THE SKIES EAST OF SEATTLE. NO WORD YET ON--
UH... APPARENTLY THIS RENDERS MY STATEMENT ABOUT THE THREAT BEING ENDED--INOPERATIVE.
IRON MAN--YOU'VE GOT TO STOP MORE OF THOSE MONSTERS FROM REACHING HERE--!
IF YOU TWO WILL EXCUSE ME, IT LOOKS LIKE I'VE GOT MY WORK CUT OUT FOR ME...


YOU'RE *NOT* GOING AFTER THEM *ALONE*, IRON MAN.
I MAY STILL LACK AN ARM, BUT MS. BAIN'S EQUIPMENT HAS *ENERGIZED* ME ENOUGH TO SEE ME THROUGH -- IF I CAN JUST RETURN FOR A FEW MINUTES TO MY *LAB*.
LORD KNOWS, I CAN *USE* YOUR HELP, X-15...
...SO *LET'S GET CRACKING!*
MS. BAIN-- WHAT DO YOU WANT US TO DO WITH THE *DUPLICATE* MACHINE MAN?
SHOULD WE FIRE IT UP, SO *IT*, TOO, CAN HELP IRON MAN AGAINST THOSE METAL CREATURES?
ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND, MAN?
IF THAT TIN-CAN TEDDY BEAR HAD ATTACKED A FEW MINUTES *LATER*, WE'D HAVE ALREADY *DESTROYED* THE ORIGINAL X-15, TOLD IRON MAN SOME *FAIRYTALE*--
--AND COME ON THE MARKET A FEW MONTHS LATER WITH A MACHINE MAN TOTALLY OWNED BY *BAINTRONICS*.
AS IT IS, WE'LL HAVE TO *ALTER* THE DESIGN A BIT, IN ORDER TO SECURE *PATENTS* AND *TRADEMARKS*...
WHY, WHO KNOWS?
WE MAY EVEN DECIDE TO GIVE *OUR* MACHINE-MEN HEADS LIKE THAT "*FEMALE*" CRANIUM WE TOOK FROM HIM.
WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? AFTER ALL--
--THEY'LL ONLY BE *ROBOTS!*
OUR ROBOTS!
IT'S NOT LIKE ROBOTS HAVE ANY REAL *FEELINGS* OR ANYTHING!


PETER...
I FEEL SO AWFUL! MAYBE IF I'D STUCK AROUND INSTEAD'A GOIN' OUT FOR SOME BLASTED PIZZA...
--THEN YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN KILLED AS WELL, GEARS.
I THANK THE FATES YOU WERE NOT HERE.
SO, AVENGER, WHAT DO YOU THINK MADE THOSE METAL MONSTERS BYPASS SEATTLE, AND HEAD OFF SOUTH?
I'M NOT SURE, OFFICER.
MAYBE SOME SORT OF GROUP MIND TOLD THEM WE'D MANAGED TO DESTROY THE FIRST OF THEM TO REACH THIS CITY, SO...


Y'KNOW, MAC, I ALWAYS THOUGHT OF PETER SPAULDING AS A KIND OF A WIMP. BUT THE WAY HE SAVED YOUR LIFE AND ALL--I SEE WHAT A MACHO IDIOT I WAS.
I ONLY W-WISH--I'D BEEN ABLE TO T-TELL HIM--
DEEP DOWN, GEARS, I AM SURE HE ALWAYS KNEW.
MACHINE MAN--IF YOU DON'T WANT TO--


I AM COMING WITH YOU, IRON MAN.
IN THIS PARTICULAR INSTANCE, I WILL BE AS MUCH AN AVENGER AS YOU.
BUT WON'T YOU BE AS VULNERABLE TO HEAT AS THOSE--I GUESS WE SHOULD PLURALIZE THE TERM NOW--"TERMINI"?
NEGATIVE. IN THEIR ALLOYED FORM, MY COMPONENTS ARE FAR MORE RESISTANT TO TEMPERATURE THAN PURE TITANIUM.
WELL, THEN, WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR?


LET'S GO TERMINATE SOME "TERMINI"!
TO BE CONTINUED--IN THE PAGES OF THOR ANNUAL #15, ON SALE SOON!

MARVEL ANNUAL
THE TERMINUS FACTOR
64 PAGES
PART THREE OF FIVE
THE MIGHTY THOR
15 • 1990
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
the mighty THOR
THE RETURN OF THE ORIGINAL TERMINUS!

TERMINUS FACTOR PART III

...CAN TERMINUS BE FAR BEHIND?

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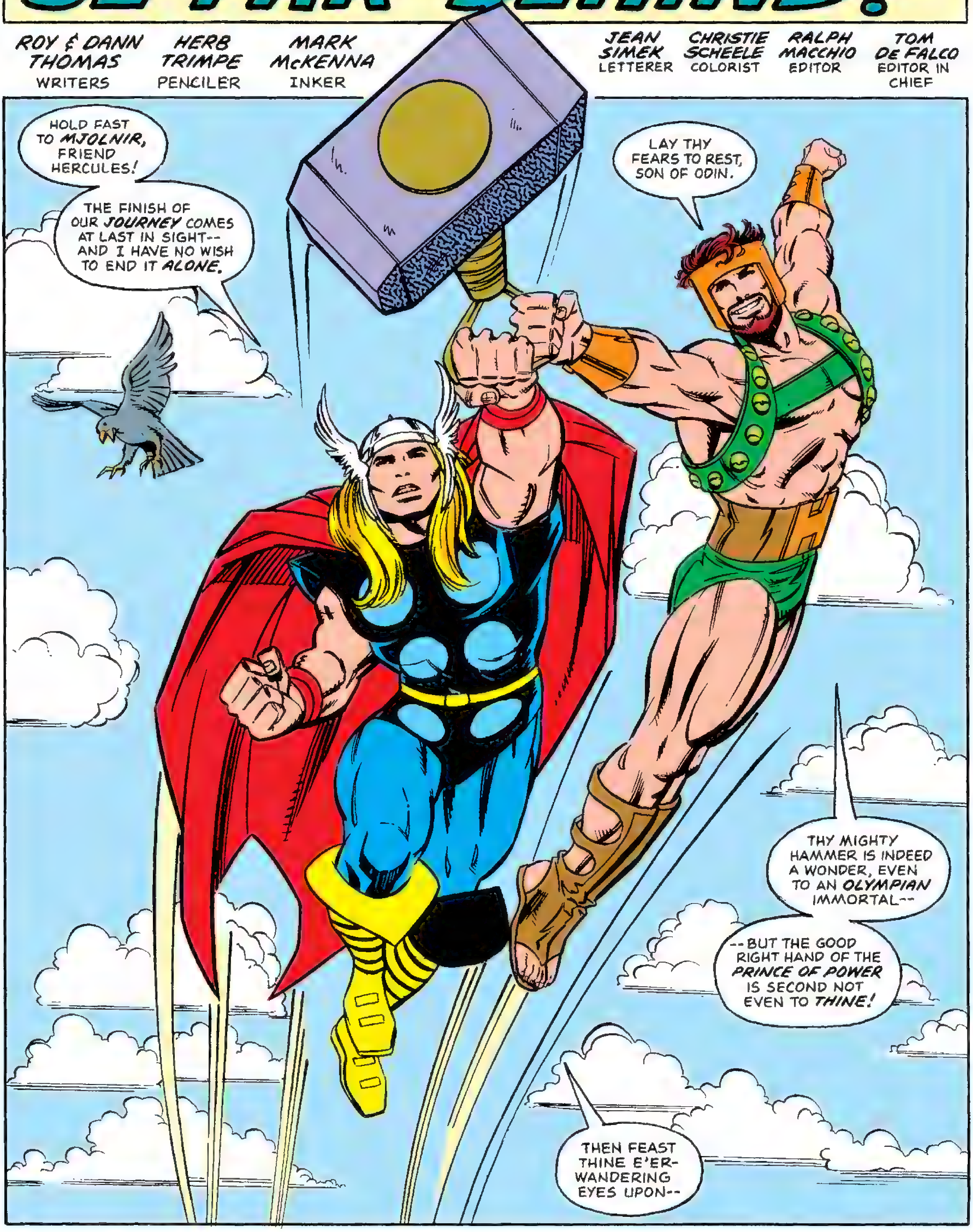
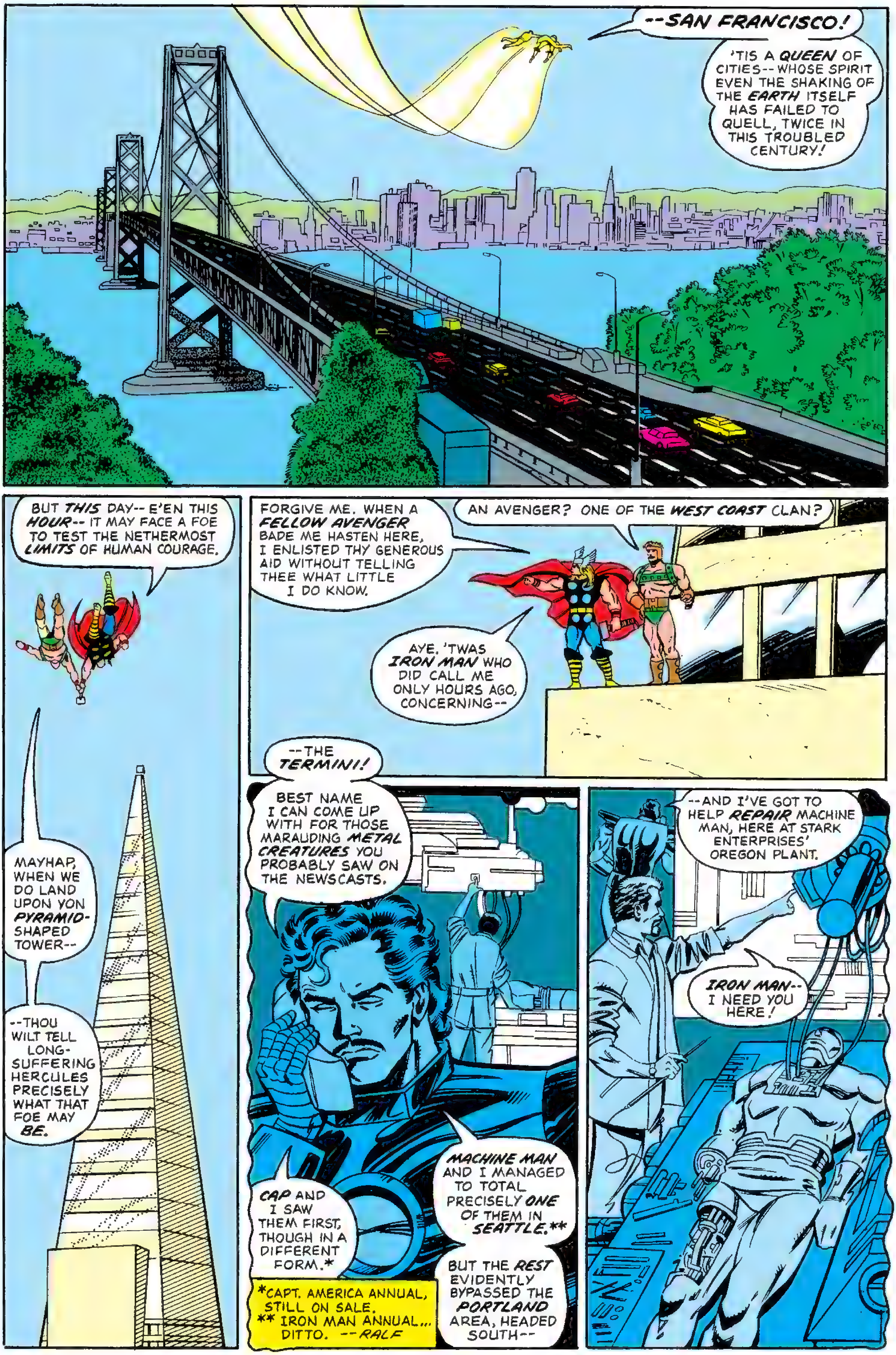
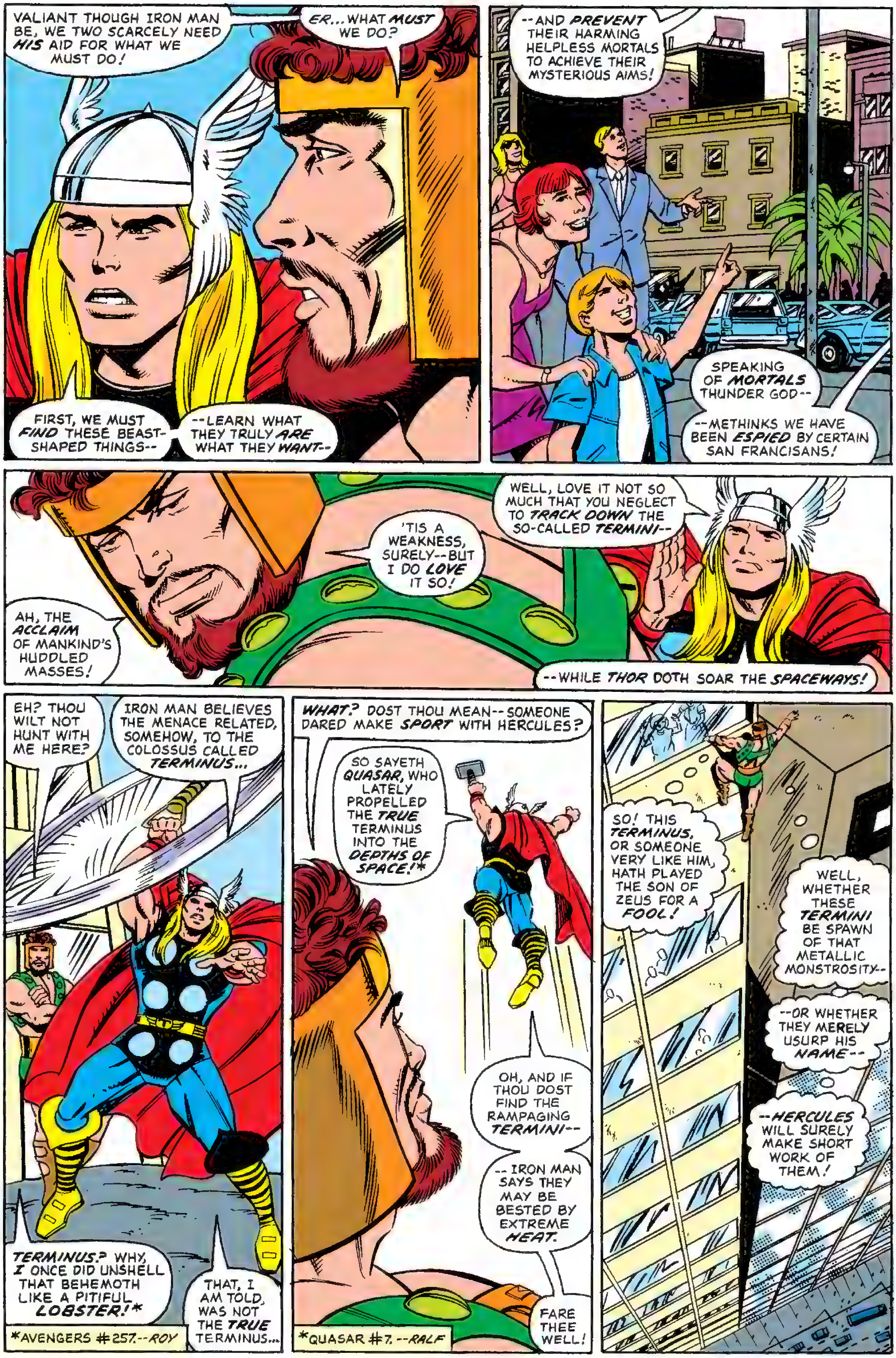
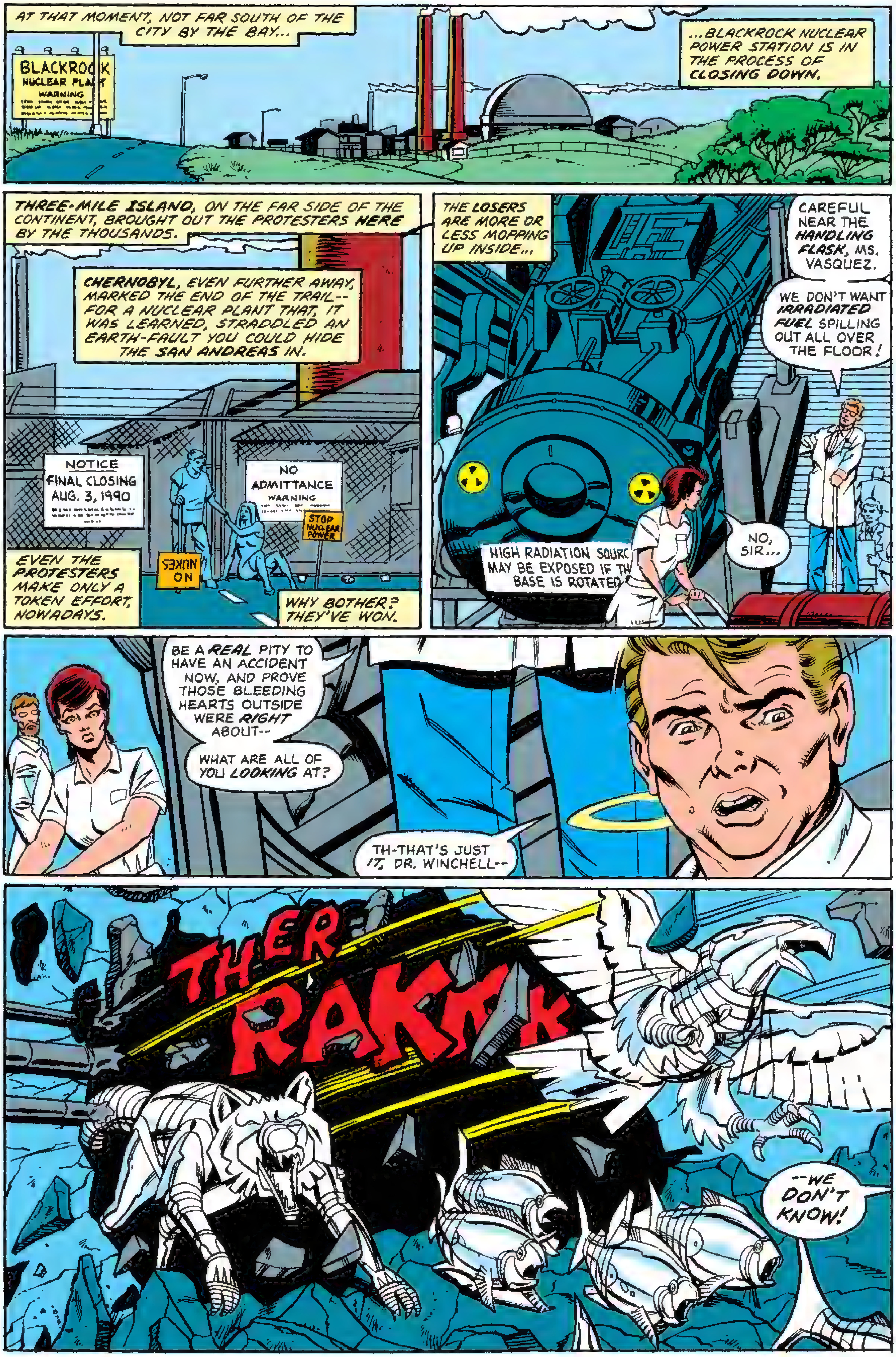
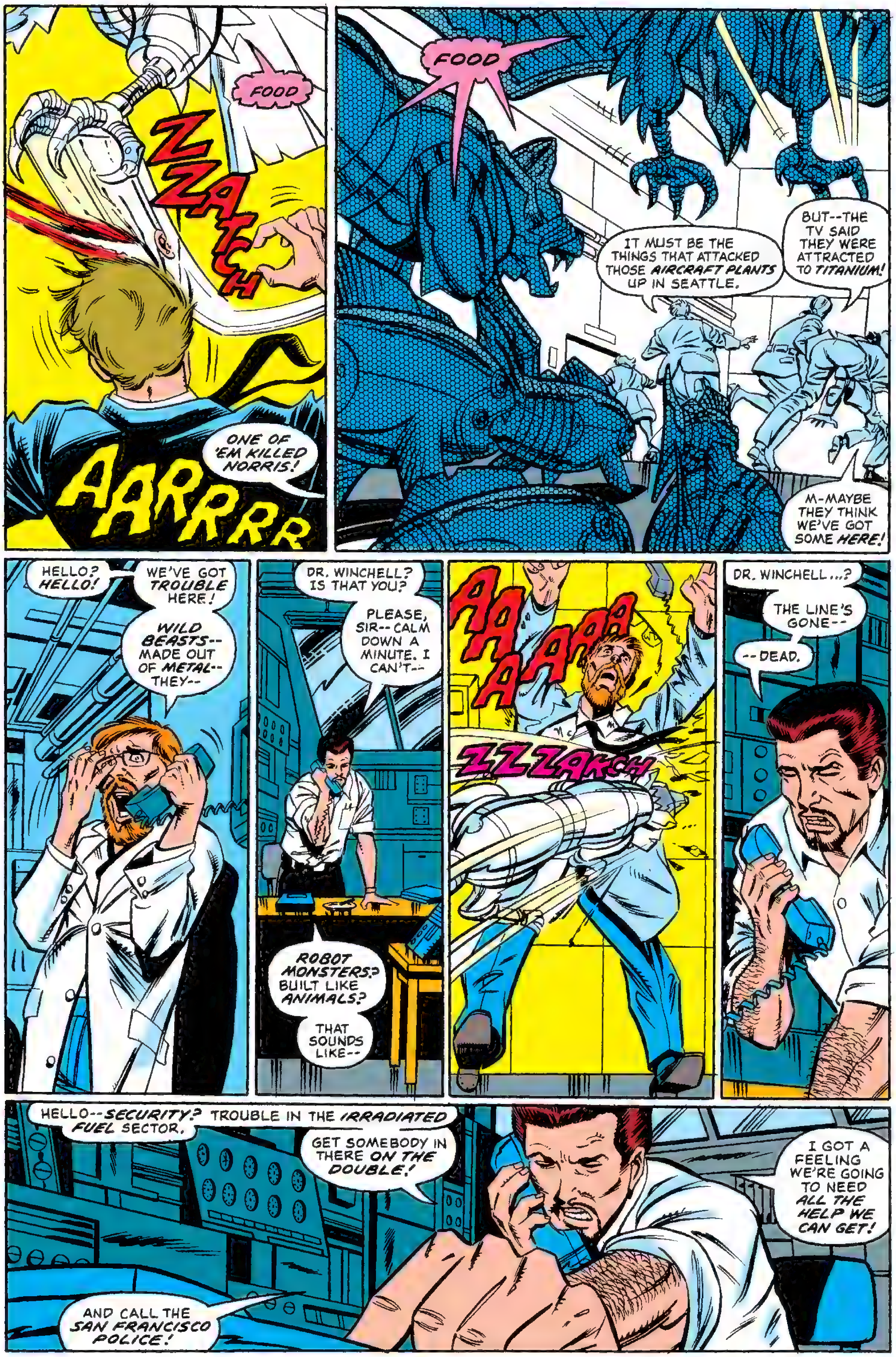
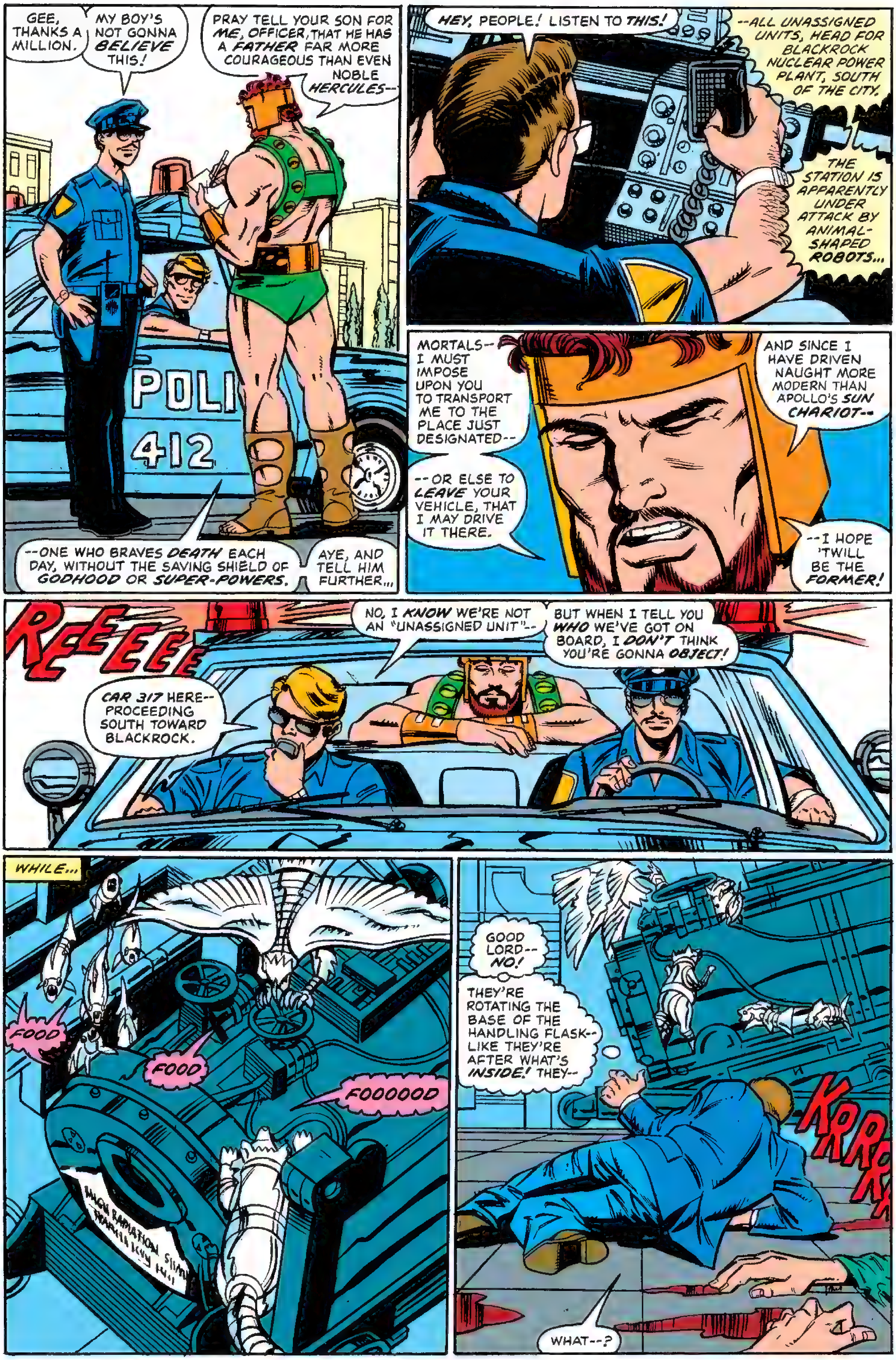

HOLD FAST TO *MJOLNIR*, FRIEND HERCULES!
THE FINISH OF OUR *JOURNEY* COMES AT LAST IN SIGHT-- AND I HAVE NO WISH TO END IT *ALONE*.
LAY THY FEARS TO REST, SON OF ODIN.
THY MIGHTY HAMMER IS INDEED A WONDER, EVEN TO AN *OLYMPIAN* IMMORTAL--
--BUT THE GOOD RIGHT HAND OF THE *PRINCE OF POWER* IS SECOND NOT EVEN TO *THINE!*
THEN FEAST THINE E'ER-WANDERING EYES UPON--

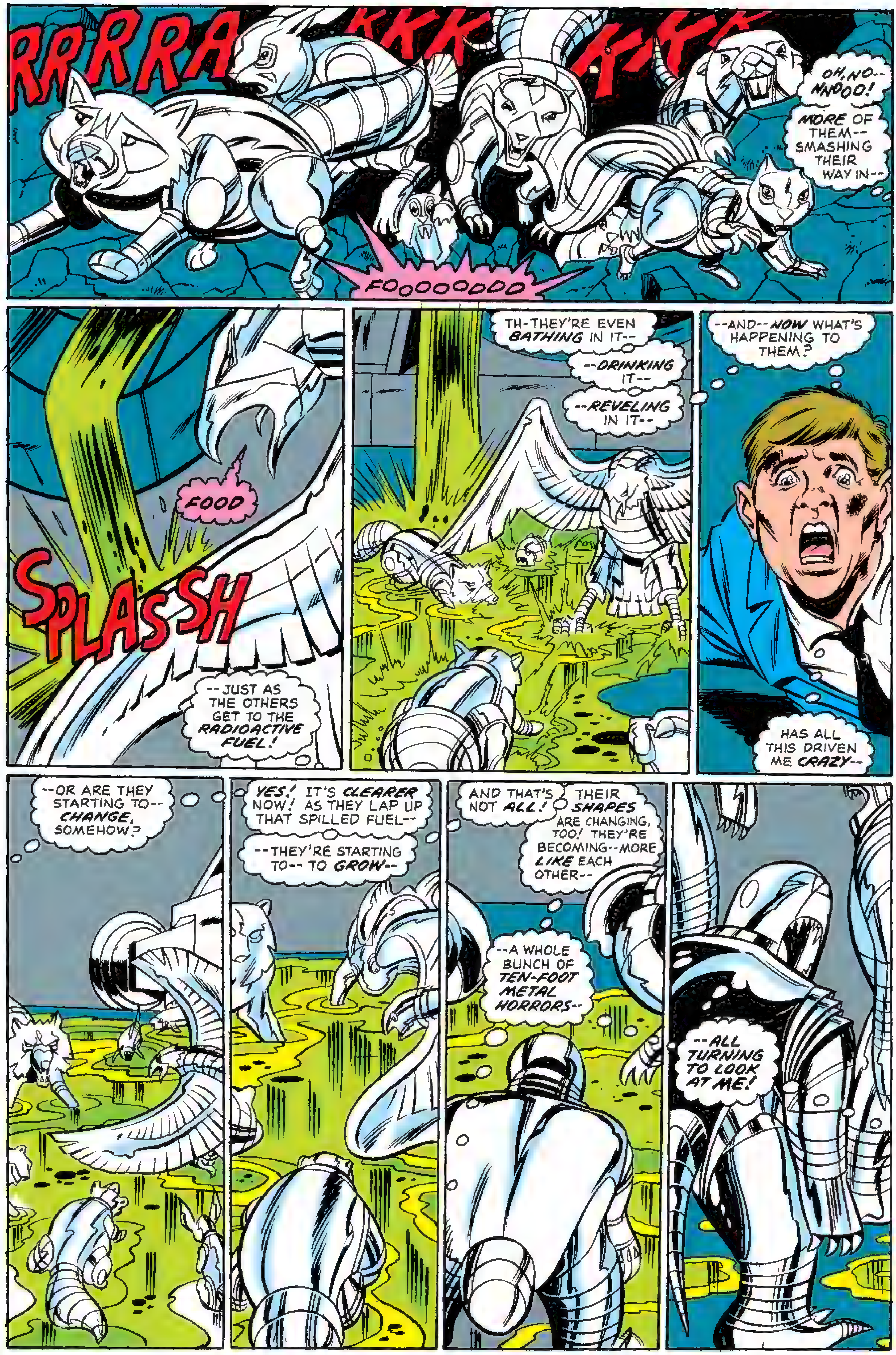

--SAN FRANCISCO!
'TIS A QUEEN OF CITIES--WHOSE SPIRIT EVEN THE SHAKING OF THE EARTH ITSELF HAS FAILED TO QUELL, TWICE IN THIS TROUBLED CENTURY!
BUT THIS DAY--E'EN THIS HOUR--IT MAY FACE A FOE TO TEST THE NETHERMOST LIMITS OF HUMAN COURAGE.
MAYHAP, WHEN WE DO LAND UPON YON PYRAMID-SHAPED TOWER--
--THOU WILT TELL LONG-SUFFERING HERCULES PRECISELY WHAT THAT FOE MAY BE.
FORGIVE ME. WHEN A FELLOW AVENGER BADE ME HASTEN HERE, I ENLISTED THY GENEROUS AID WITHOUT TELLING THEE WHAT LITTLE I DO KNOW.
AN AVENGER? ONE OF THE WEST COAST CLAN?
AYE. 'TWAS IRON MAN WHO DID CALL ME ONLY HOURS AGO, CONCERNING--
--THE TERMINI!
BEST NAME I CAN COME UP WITH FOR THOSE MARAUDING METAL CREATURES YOU PROBABLY SAW ON THE NEWSCASTS.
CAP AND I SAW THEM FIRST, THOUGH IN A DIFFERENT FORM.*
MACHINE MAN AND I MANAGED TO TOTAL PRECISELY ONE OF THEM IN SEATTLE.**
BUT THE REST EVIDENTLY BYPASSED THE PORTLAND AREA, HEADED SOUTH--
*CAPT. AMERICA ANNUAL, STILL ON SALE.
** IRON MAN ANNUAL... DITTO. --RALF
--AND I'VE GOT TO HELP REPAIR MACHINE MAN, HERE AT STARK ENTERPRISES' OREGON PLANT.
IRON MAN--I NEED YOU HERE!

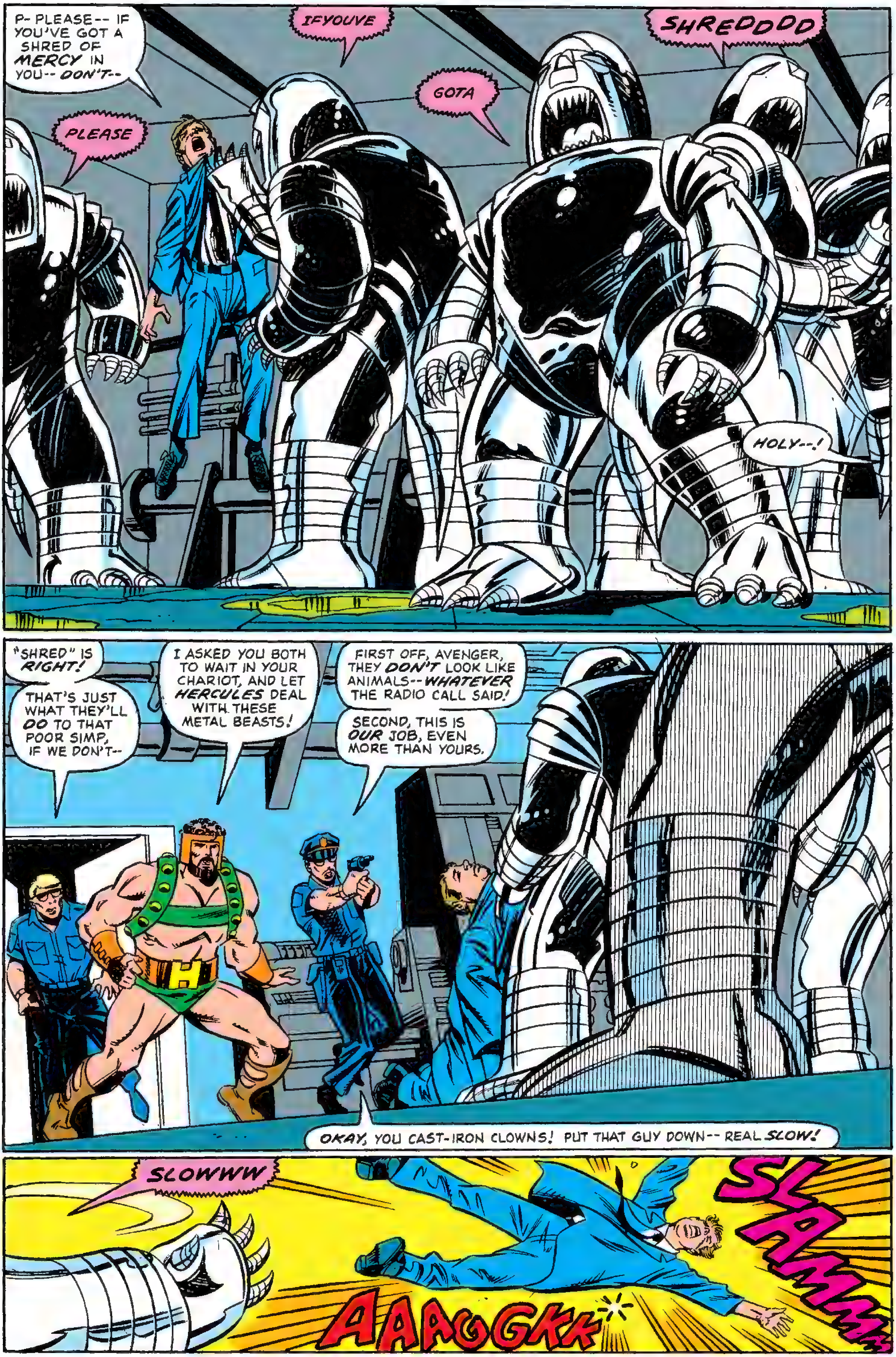

VALIANT THOUGH IRON MAN BE, WE TWO SCARCELY NEED HIS AID FOR WHAT WE MUST DO!
ER...WHAT MUST WE DO?
FIRST, WE MUST FIND THESE BEAST-SHAPED THINGS--
--LEARN WHAT THEY TRULY ARE WHAT THEY WANT--
--AND PREVENT THEIR HARMING HELPLESS MORTALS TO ACHIEVE THEIR MYSTERIOUS AIMS!--
SPEAKING OF MORTALS THUNDER GOD--
--METHINKS WE HAVE BEEN ESPIED BY CERTAIN SAN FRANCISANS!
AH, THE ACCLAIM OF MANKIND'S HUDDLED MASSES!
'TIS A WEAKNESS, SURELY--BUT I DO LOVE IT SO!
WELL, LOVE IT NOT SO MUCH THAT YOU NEGLECT TO TRACK DOWN THE SO-CALLED TERMINI--
--WHILE THOR DOTH SOAR THE SPACEWAYS!
EH? THOU WILT NOT HUNT WITH ME HERE?
IRON MAN BELIEVES THE MENACE RELATED, SOMEHOW, TO THE COLOSSUS CALLED TERMINUS...
TERMINUS? WHY, I ONCE DID UNSHELL THAT BEHEMOTH LIKE A PITIFUL LOBSTER!*
THAT, I AM TOLD, WAS NOT THE TRUE TERMINUS...
*AVENGERS #257.--ROY
WHAT? DOST THOU MEAN--SOMEONE DARED MAKE SPORT WITH HERCULES?
SO SAYETH QUASAR, WHO LATELY PROPELLED THE TRUE TERMINUS INTO THE DEPTHS OF SPACE!*
OH, AND IF THOU DOST FIND THE RAMPAGING TERMINI--
--IRON MAN SAYS THEY MAY BE BESTED BY EXTREME HEAT.
FARE THEE WELL!
*QUASAR #7.--RALF
SO! THIS TERMINUS, OR SOMEONE VERY LIKE HIM, HATH PLAYED THE SON OF ZEUS FOR A FOOL!
WELL, WHETHER THESE TERMINI BE SPAWN OF THAT METALLIC MONSTROSITY--
--OR WHETHER THEY MERELY USURP HIS NAME--
--HERCULES WILL SURELY MAKE SHORT WORK OF THEM!

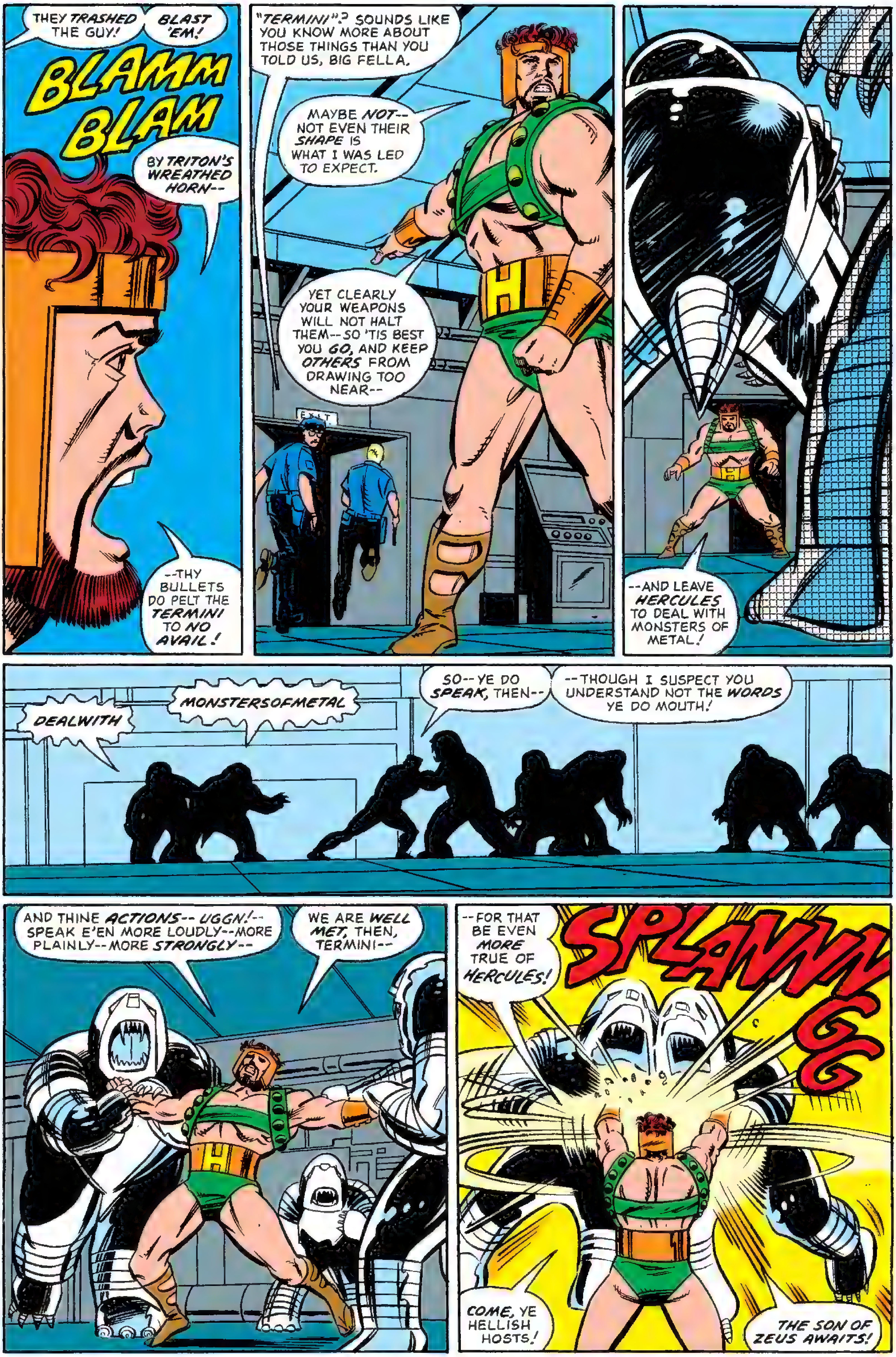

AT THAT MOMENT, NOT FAR SOUTH OF THE CITY BY THE BAY...
BLACKRO K
NUCLEAR PLA T
WARNING
...BLACKROCK NUCLEAR POWER STATION IS IN THE PROCESS OF CLOSING DOWN.
THREE-MILE ISLAND, ON THE FAR SIDE OF THE CONTINENT, BROUGHT OUT THE PROTESTERS HERE BY THE THOUSANDS.
CHERNOBYL, EVEN FURTHER AWAY, MARKED THE END OF THE TRAIL-- FOR A NUCLEAR PLANT THAT, IT WAS LEARNED, STRADDLED AN EARTH-FAULT YOU COULD HIDE THE SAN ANDREAS IN.
NOTICE
FINAL CLOSING
AUG. 3, 1990
NO ADMITTANCE
WARNING
STOP NUCLEAR POWER
NO NUKES
EVEN THE PROTESTERS MAKE ONLY A TOKEN EFFORT, NOWADAYS.
WHY BOTHER? THEY'VE WON.
THE LOSERS ARE MORE OR LESS MOPPING UP INSIDE...
CAREFUL NEAR THE HANDLING FLASK, MS. VASQUEZ.
WE DON'T WANT IRRADIATED FUEL SPILLING OUT ALL OVER THE FLOOR!
HIGH RADIATION SOURC
MAY BE EXPOSED IF TH
BASE IS ROTATED
NO, SIR...
BE A REAL PITY TO HAVE AN ACCIDENT NOW, AND PROVE THOSE BLEEDING HEARTS OUTSIDE WERE RIGHT ABOUT--
WHAT ARE ALL OF YOU LOOKING AT?
TH-THAT'S JUST IT, DR. WINCHELL--
THERRAKKK
--WE DON'T KNOW!

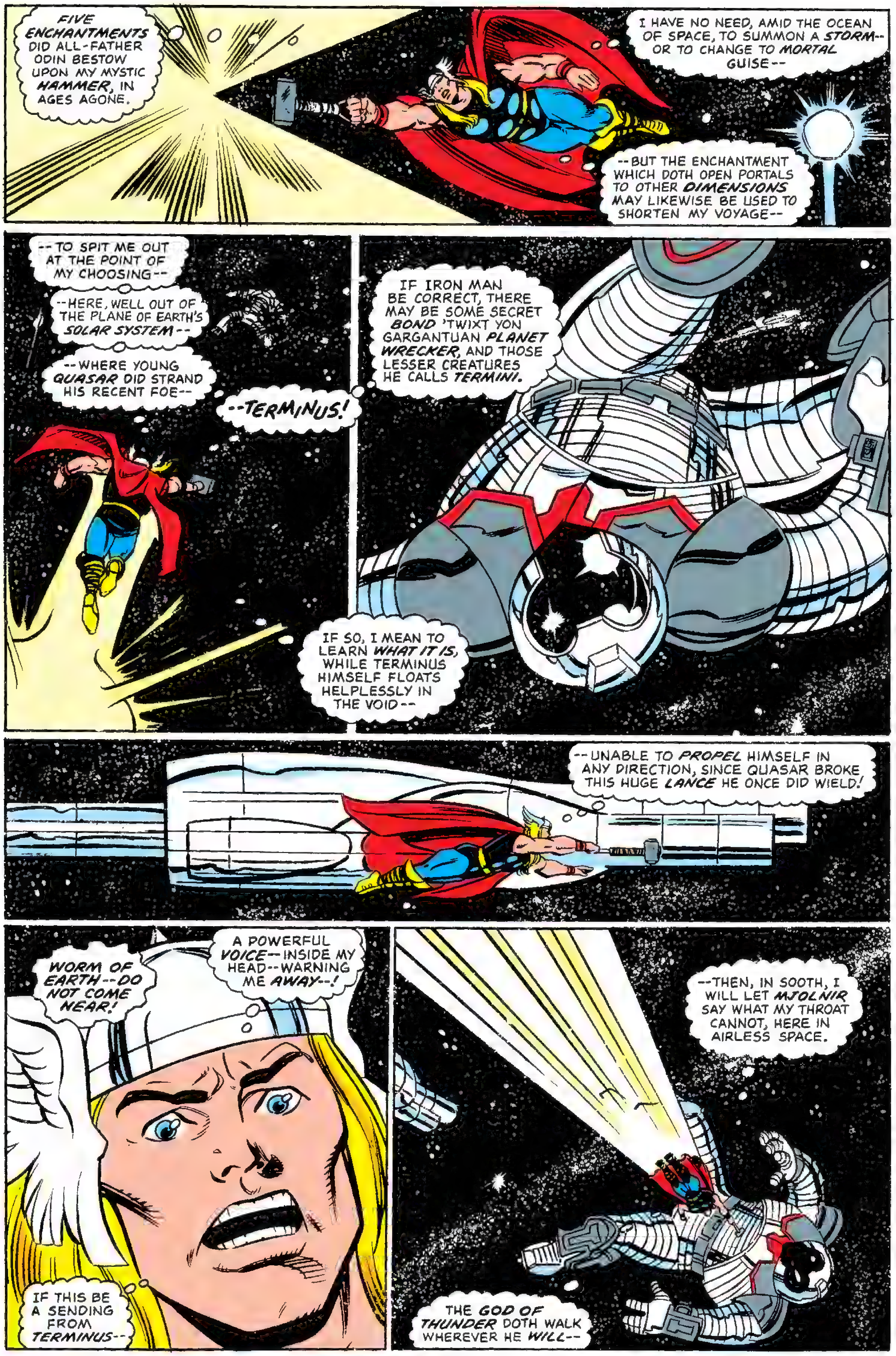

FOOD
ZZATCH
AARRRRR
ONE OF 'EM KILLED NORRIS!
FOOD
IT MUST BE THE THINGS THAT ATTACKED THOSE AIRCRAFT PLANTS UP IN SEATTLE.
BUT--THE TV SAID THEY WERE ATTRACTED TO TITANIUM!
M-MAYBE THEY THINK WE'VE GOT SOME HERE!
HELLO? HELLO!
WE'VE GOT TROUBLE HERE!
WILD BEASTS-- MADE OUT OF METAL-- THEY--
DR. WINCHELL? IS THAT YOU?
PLEASE, SIR-- CALM DOWN A MINUTE. I CAN'T--
ROBOT MONSTERS? BUILT LIKE ANIMALS?
THAT SOUNDS LIKE--
AAAAAAA
ZZZAKCH
DR. WINCHELL...?
THE LINE'S GONE--
--DEAD.
HELLO--SECURITY? TROUBLE IN THE IRRADIATED FUEL SECTOR.
GET SOMEBODY IN THERE ON THE DOUBLE!
I GOT A FEELING WE'RE GOING TO NEED ALL THE HELP WE CAN GET!
AND CALL THE SAN FRANCISCO POLICE!

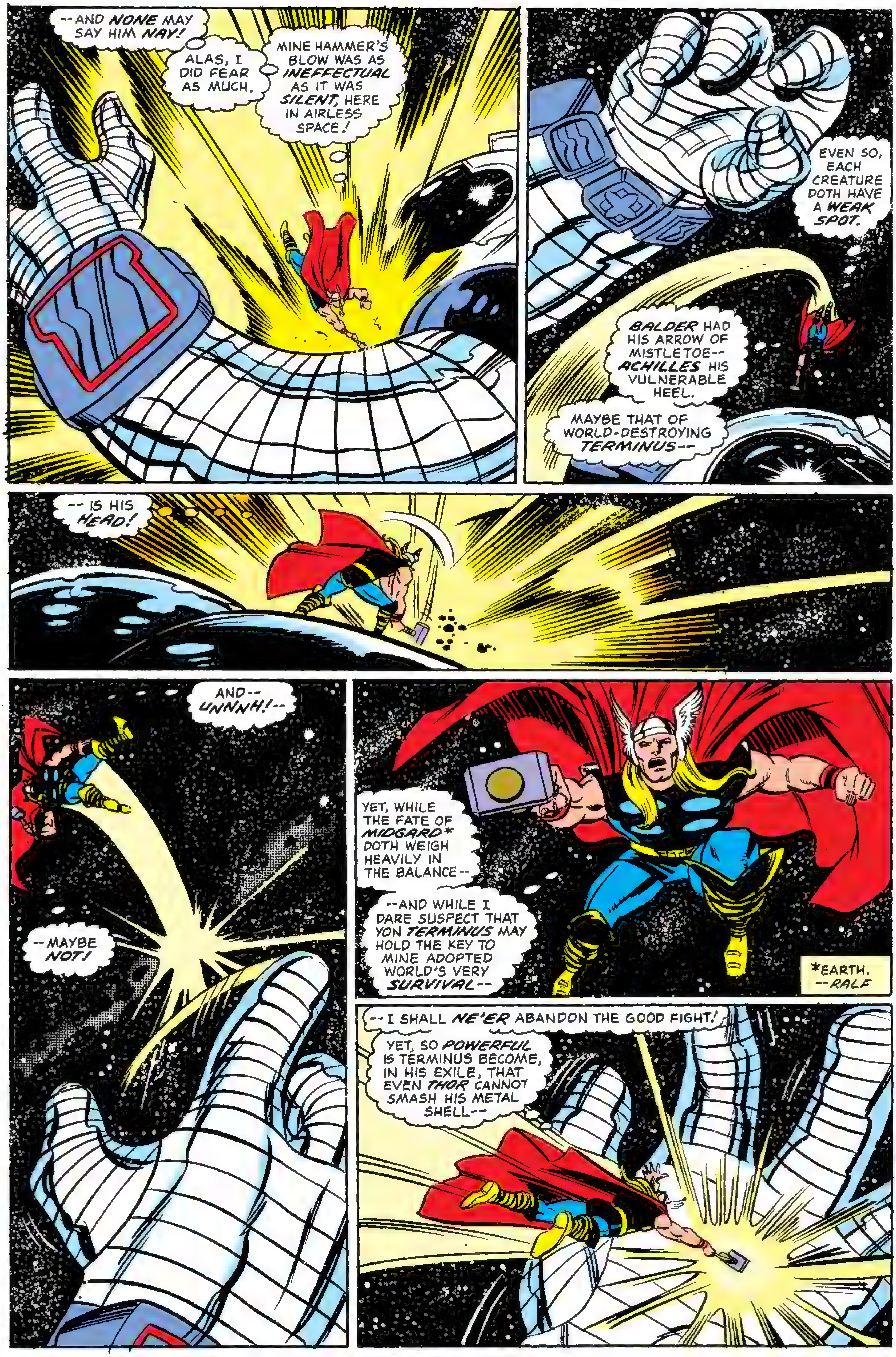

GEE, THANKS A MILLION.
MY BOY'S NOT GONNA *BELIEVE* THIS!
PRAY TELL YOUR SON FOR *ME*, OFFICER, THAT HE HAS A *FATHER* FAR MORE COURAGEOUS THAN EVEN NOBLE *HERCULES*--
POLI
412
--ONE WHO BRAVES *DEATH* EACH DAY, WITHOUT THE SAVING SHIELD OF *GODHOOD* OR *SUPER-POWERS*.
AYE, AND TELL HIM FURTHER...
HEY, PEOPLE! LISTEN TO *THIS!*
--ALL UNASSIGNED UNITS, HEAD FOR BLACKROCK NUCLEAR POWER PLANT, SOUTH OF THE CITY.
THE STATION IS APPARENTLY UNDER ATTACK BY ANIMAL-SHAPED ROBOTS...
MORTALS-- I MUST IMPOSE UPON YOU TO TRANSPORT ME TO THE PLACE JUST DESIGNATED--
--OR ELSE TO *LEAVE* YOUR VEHICLE, THAT I MAY DRIVE IT THERE.
AND SINCE I HAVE DRIVEN NAUGHT MORE MODERN THAN APOLLO'S *SUN CHARIOT*--
--I HOPE 'TWILL BE THE *FORMER!*
REEEEEE
NO, I *KNOW* WE'RE NOT AN "UNASSIGNED UNIT"--
BUT WHEN I TELL YOU *WHO* WE'VE GOT ON BOARD, I *DON'T* THINK YOU'RE GONNA *OBJECT!*
CAR 317 HERE-- PROCEEDING SOUTH TOWARD BLACKROCK.
WHILE...
FOOD
FOOD
FOOOOOD
HIGH RADIATION
GOOD LORD-- *NO!*
THEY'RE ROTATING THE BASE OF THE HANDLING FLASK-- LIKE THEY'RE AFTER WHAT'S *INSIDE!* THEY--
KRRRR
WHAT--?

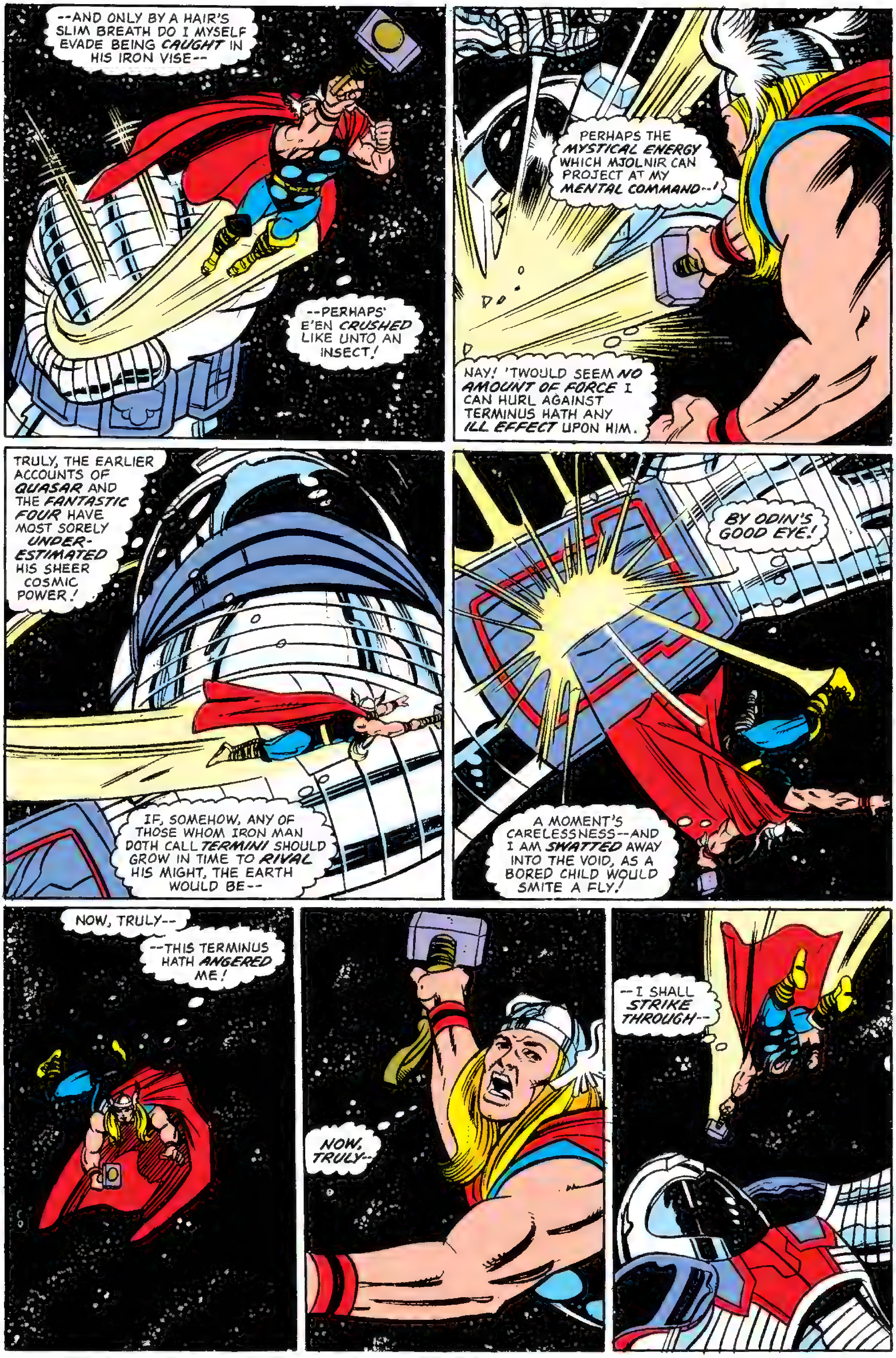

RRRRAKKKK-K-K
OH, NO--NNOOO!
MORE OF THEM--SMASHING THEIR WAY IN--
FOOOOOOOOO
FOOD
SPLASSH
--JUST AS THE OTHERS GET TO THE RADIOACTIVE FUEL!
TH-THEY'RE EVEN BATHING IN IT--
--DRINKING IT--
--REVELING IN IT--
--AND--NOW WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THEM?
HAS ALL THIS DRIVEN ME CRAZY--
--OR ARE THEY STARTING TO--CHANGE, SOMEHOW?
YES! IT'S CLEARER NOW! AS THEY LAP UP THAT SPILLED FUEL--
--THEY'RE STARTING TO--TO GROW--
AND THAT'S NOT ALL!
THEIR SHAPES ARE CHANGING, TOO! THEY'RE BECOMING--MORE LIKE EACH OTHER--
--A WHOLE BUNCH OF TEN-FOOT METAL HORRORS--
--ALL TURNING TO LOOK AT ME!

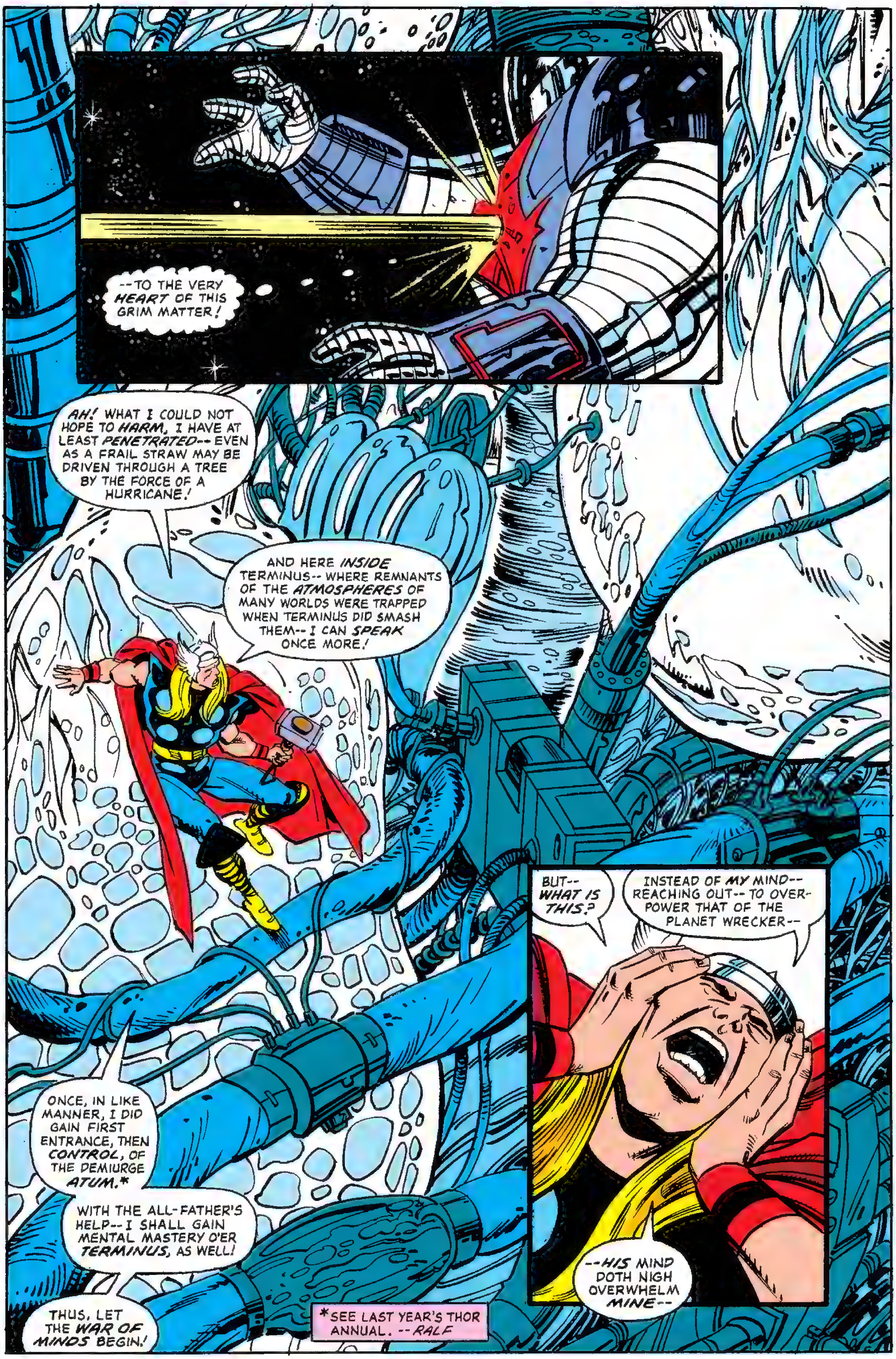

P-PLEASE-- IF YOU'VE GOT A SHRED OF MERCY IN YOU-- DON'T--
PLEASE
IFYOUVE
GOTA
SHREDDDD
HOLY--!
"SHRED" IS RIGHT!
THAT'S JUST WHAT THEY'LL DO TO THAT POOR SIMP, IF WE DON'T--
I ASKED YOU BOTH TO WAIT IN YOUR CHARIOT, AND LET HERCULES DEAL WITH THESE METAL BEASTS!
FIRST OFF, AVENGER, THEY DON'T LOOK LIKE ANIMALS-- WHATEVER THE RADIO CALL SAID!
SECOND, THIS IS OUR JOB, EVEN MORE THAN YOURS.
OKAY, YOU CAST-IRON CLOWNS! PUT THAT GUY DOWN-- REAL SLOW!
SLOWWW
SLAMMM
AAAGGKK

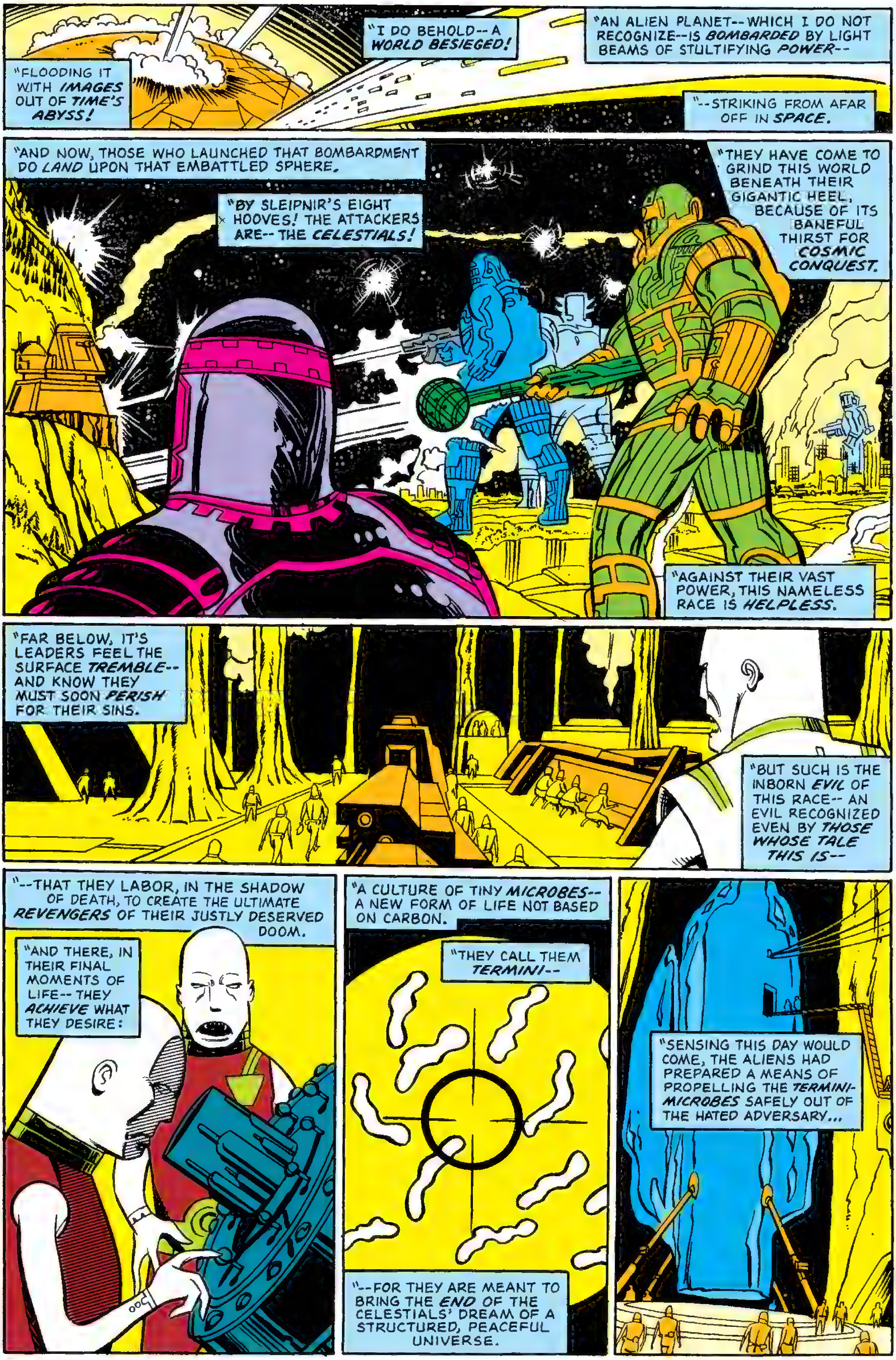

THEY TRASHED THE GUY!
BLAST 'EM!
BLAMM BLAM
BY TRITON'S WREATHED HORN--
--THY BULLETS DO PELT THE TERMINI TO NO AVAIL!
"TERMINI"? SOUNDS LIKE YOU KNOW MORE ABOUT THOSE THINGS THAN YOU TOLD US, BIG FELLA.
MAYBE NOT-- NOT EVEN THEIR SHAPE IS WHAT I WAS LED TO EXPECT.
YET CLEARLY YOUR WEAPONS WILL NOT HALT THEM--SO 'TIS BEST YOU GO, AND KEEP OTHERS FROM DRAWING TOO NEAR--
EXIT
--AND LEAVE HERCULES TO DEAL WITH MONSTERS OF METAL!
DEALWITH
MONSTERSOFMETAL
SO--YE DO SPEAK, THEN--
--THOUGH I SUSPECT YOU UNDERSTAND NOT THE WORDS YE DO MOUTH!
AND THINE ACTIONS-- UGGN!-- SPEAK E'EN MORE LOUDLY--MORE PLAINLY--MORE STRONGLY--
WE ARE WELL MET, THEN, TERMINI--
--FOR THAT BE EVEN MORE TRUE OF HERCULES!
SPLANNGG
COME, YE HELLISH HOSTS!
THE SON OF ZEUS AWAITS!

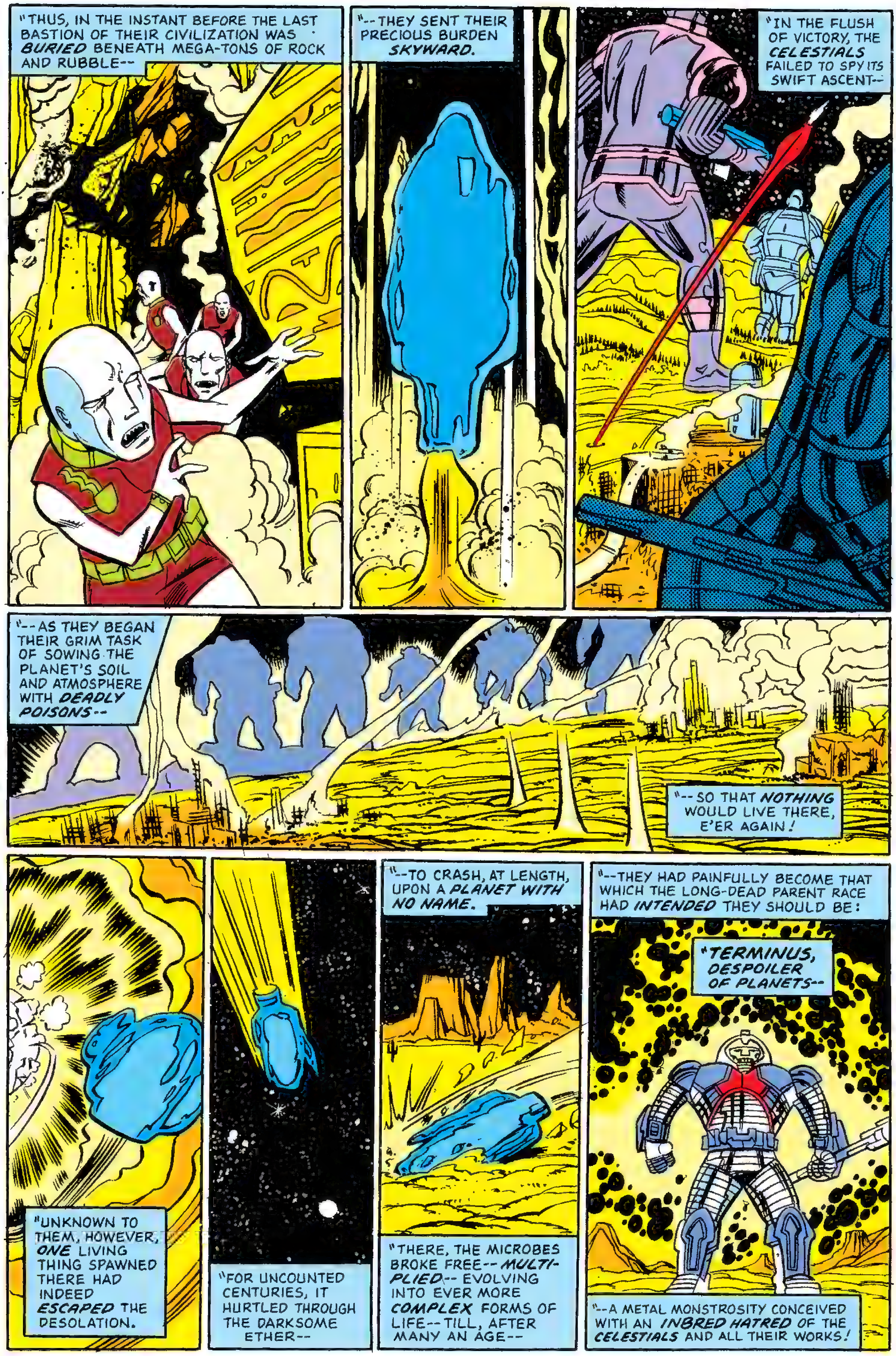

FIVE ENCHANTMENTS DID ALL-FATHER ODIN BESTOW UPON MY MYSTIC HAMMER, IN AGES AGONE.
I HAVE NO NEED, AMID THE OCEAN OF SPACE, TO SUMMON A STORM--OR TO CHANGE TO MORTAL GUISE--
--BUT THE ENCHANTMENT WHICH DOTH OPEN PORTALS TO OTHER DIMENSIONS MAY LIKEWISE BE USED TO SHORTEN MY VOYAGE--
--TO SPIT ME OUT AT THE POINT OF MY CHOOSING--
--HERE, WELL OUT OF THE PLANE OF EARTH'S SOLAR SYSTEM--
--WHERE YOUNG QUASAR DID STRAND HIS RECENT FOE--
--TERMINUS!
IF IRON MAN BE CORRECT, THERE MAY BE SOME SECRET BOND 'TWIXT YON GARGANTUAN PLANET WRECKER, AND THOSE LESSER CREATURES HE CALLS TERMINI.
IF SO, I MEAN TO LEARN WHAT IT IS, WHILE TERMINUS HIMSELF FLOATS HELPLESSLY IN THE VOID--
--UNABLE TO PROPEL HIMSELF IN ANY DIRECTION, SINCE QUASAR BROKE THIS HUGE LANCE HE ONCE DID WIELD!
WORM OF EARTH--DO NOT COME NEAR!
A POWERFUL VOICE--INSIDE MY HEAD--WARNING ME AWAY--!
IF THIS BE A SENDING FROM TERMINUS--
--THEN, IN SOOTH, I WILL LET MJOLNIR SAY WHAT MY THROAT CANNOT, HERE IN AIRLESS SPACE.
THE GOD OF THUNDER DOTH WALK WHEREVER HE WILL--

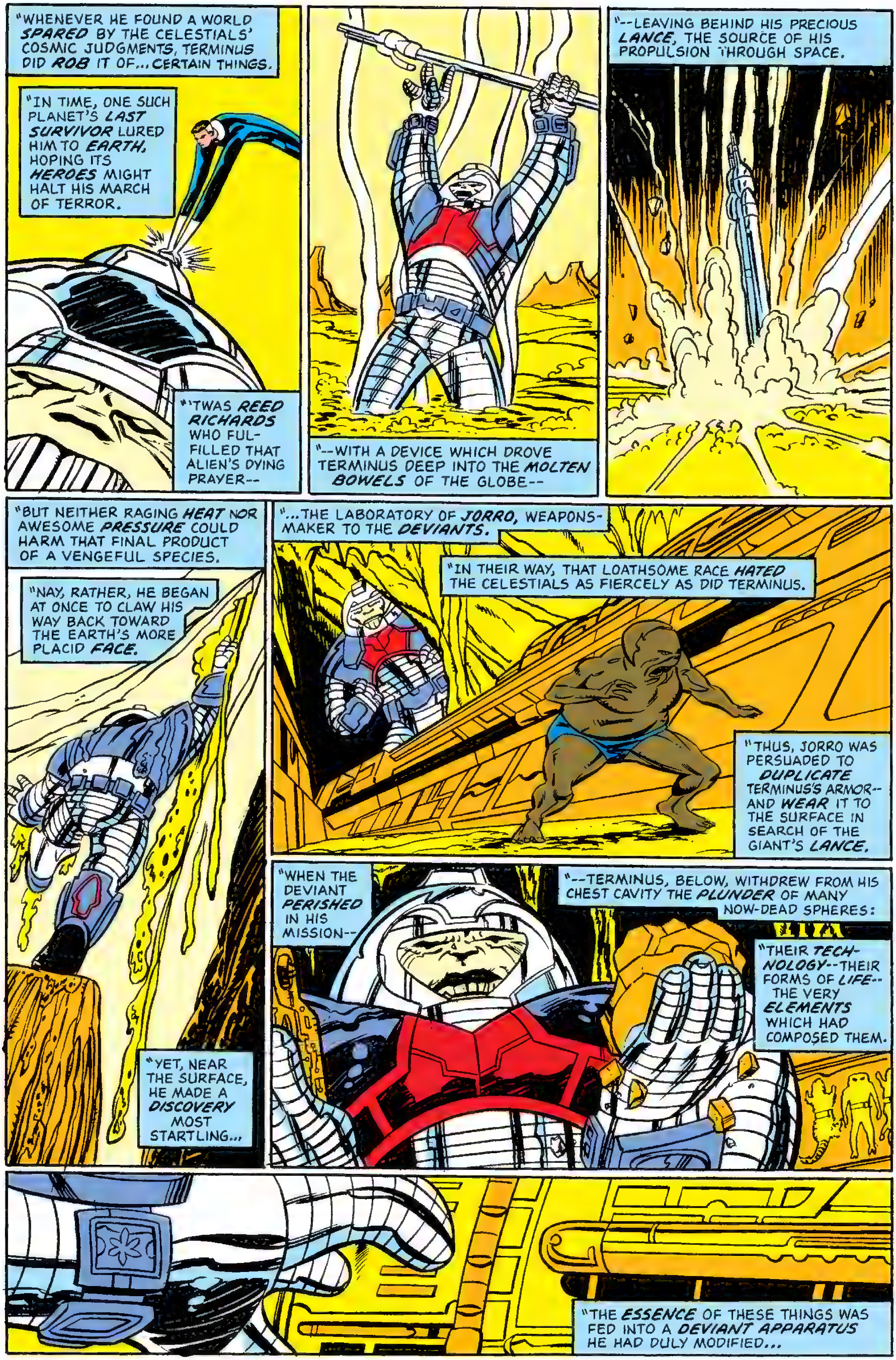

--AND *NONE* MAY SAY HIM *NAY!*
ALAS, I DID FEAR AS MUCH.
MINE HAMMER'S BLOW WAS AS *INEFFECTUAL* AS IT WAS *SILENT*, HERE IN AIRLESS SPACE!
EVEN SO, EACH CREATURE DOTH HAVE A *WEAK SPOT.*
BALDER HAD HIS ARROW OF MISTLETOE-- *ACHILLES* HIS VULNERABLE HEEL.
MAYBE THAT OF WORLD-DESTROYING *TERMINUS*--
--IS HIS *HEAD!*
AND-- *UNNNH!*--
--MAYBE *NOT!*
YET, WHILE THE FATE OF *MIDGARD** DOTH WEIGH HEAVILY IN THE BALANCE--
--AND WHILE I DARE SUSPECT THAT YON *TERMINUS* MAY HOLD THE KEY TO MINE ADOPTED WORLD'S VERY *SURVIVAL*--
*EARTH. --*RALF*
--I SHALL *NE'ER* ABANDON THE GOOD FIGHT!
YET, SO *POWERFUL* IS TERMINUS BECOME, IN HIS EXILE, THAT EVEN *THOR* CANNOT SMASH HIS METAL SHELL--

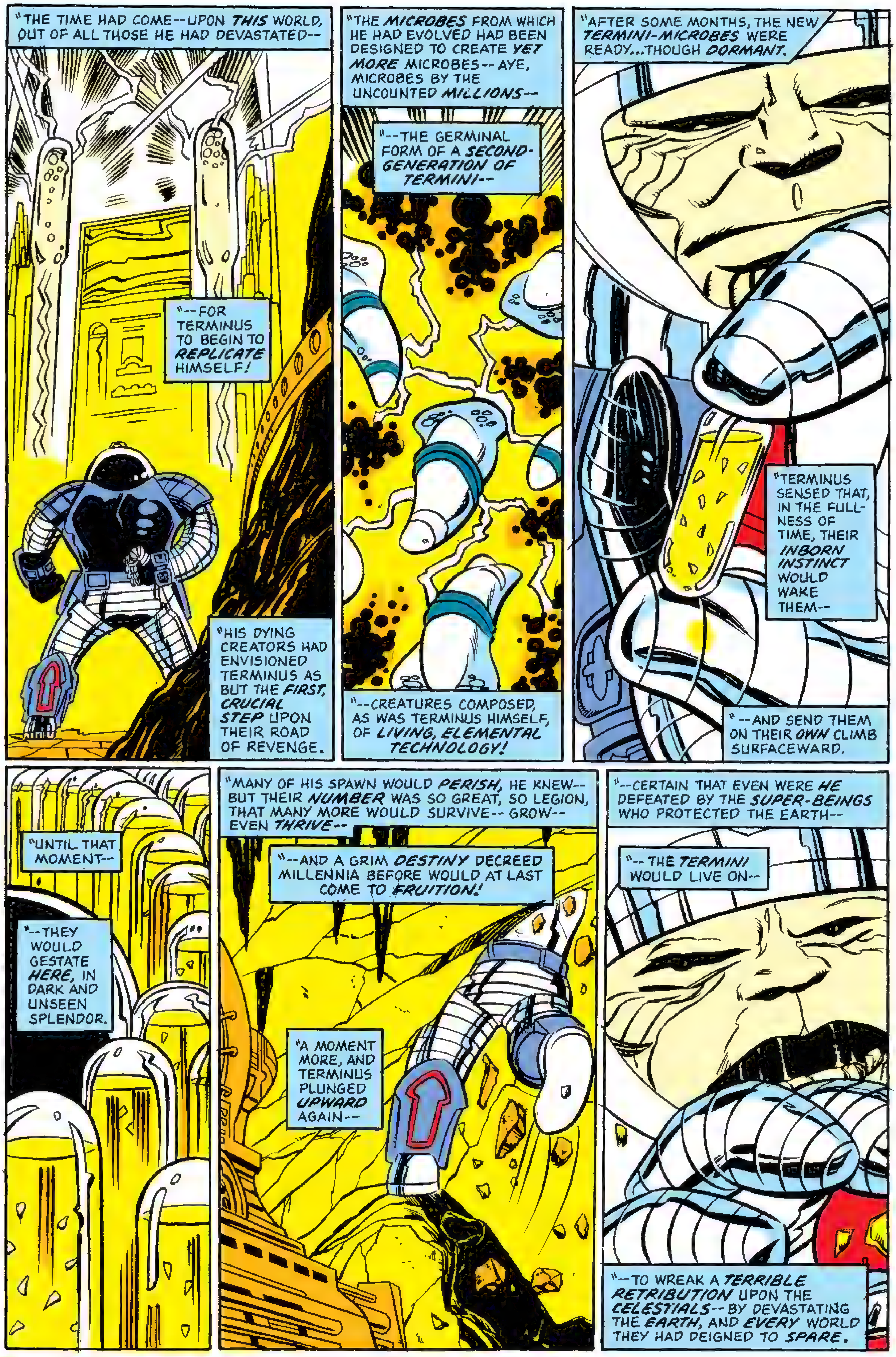

--AND ONLY BY A HAIR'S SLIM BREATH DO I MYSELF EVADE BEING *CAUGHT* IN HIS IRON VISE--
--PERHAPS' E'EN *CRUSHED* LIKE UNTO AN INSECT!
PERHAPS THE *MYSTICAL ENERGY* WHICH MJOLNIR CAN PROJECT AT MY *MENTAL COMMAND*--!
NAY! 'TWOULD SEEM *NO AMOUNT OF FORCE* I CAN HURL AGAINST TERMINUS HATH ANY *ILL EFFECT* UPON HIM.
TRULY, THE EARLIER ACCOUNTS OF *QUASAR* AND THE *FANTASTIC FOUR* HAVE MOST SORELY *UNDER-ESTIMATED* HIS SHEER COSMIC POWER!
IF, SOMEHOW, ANY OF THOSE WHOM IRON MAN DOTH CALL *TERMINI* SHOULD GROW IN TIME TO *RIVAL* HIS MIGHT, THE EARTH WOULD BE--
BY ODIN'S GOOD EYE!
A MOMENT'S CARELESSNESS--AND I AM *SWATTED* AWAY INTO THE VOID, AS A BORED CHILD WOULD SMITE A FLY!
NOW, TRULY--
--THIS TERMINUS HATH *ANGERED* ME!
NOW, TRULY--
--I SHALL *STRIKE THROUGH*--

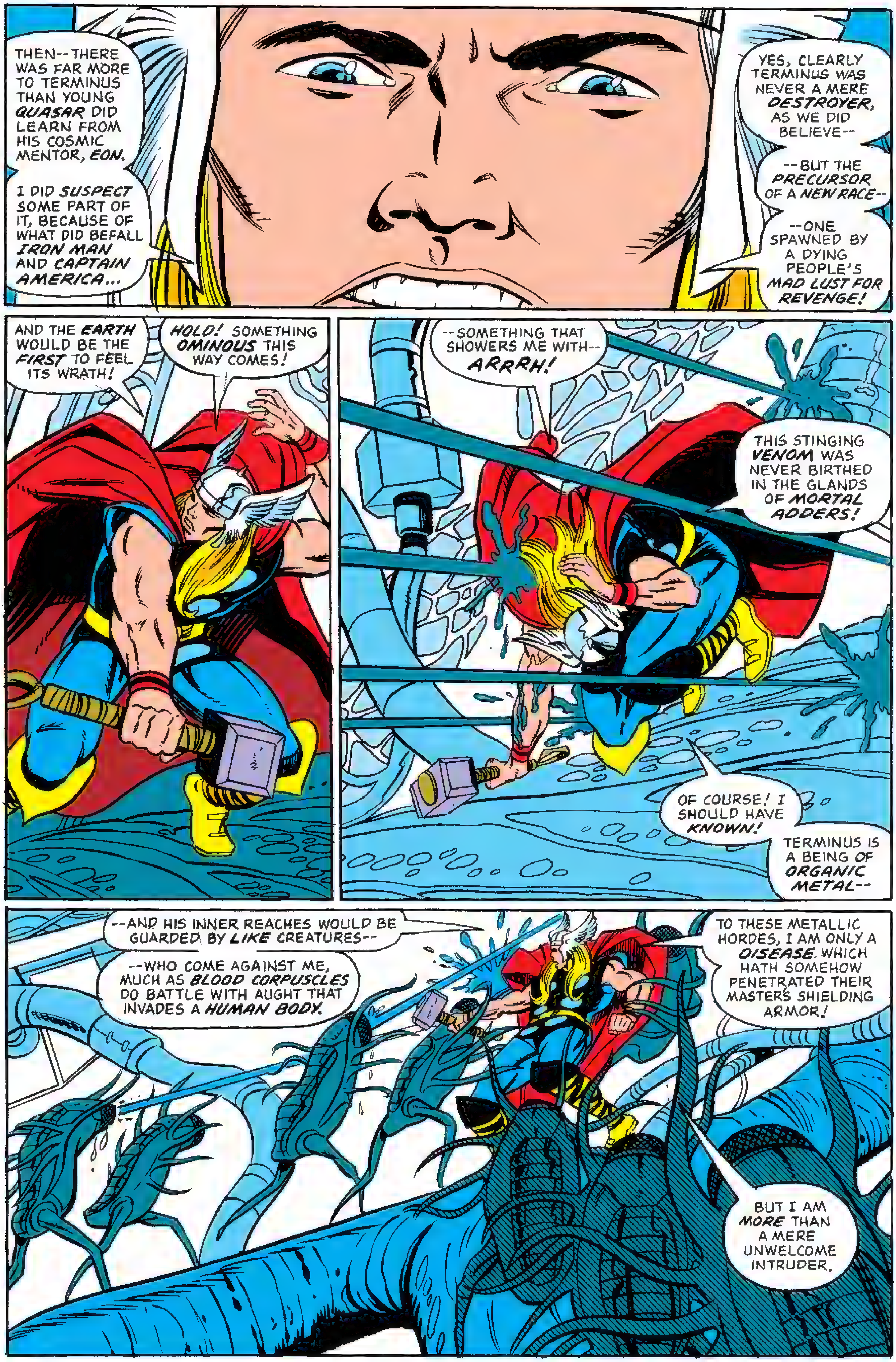

--TO THE VERY HEART OF THIS GRIM MATTER!
AH! WHAT I COULD NOT HOPE TO HARM, I HAVE AT LEAST PENETRATED-- EVEN AS A FRAIL STRAW MAY BE DRIVEN THROUGH A TREE BY THE FORCE OF A HURRICANE!
AND HERE INSIDE TERMINUS-- WHERE REMNANTS OF THE ATMOSPHERES OF MANY WORLDS WERE TRAPPED WHEN TERMINUS DID SMASH THEM-- I CAN SPEAK ONCE MORE!
ONCE, IN LIKE MANNER, I DID GAIN FIRST ENTRANCE, THEN CONTROL, OF THE DEMIURGE ATUM.*
WITH THE ALL-FATHER'S HELP-- I SHALL GAIN MENTAL MASTERY O'ER TERMINUS, AS WELL!
THUS, LET THE WAR OF MINDS BEGIN!
*SEE LAST YEAR'S THOR ANNUAL. --RALF
BUT-- WHAT IS THIS?
INSTEAD OF MY MIND-- REACHING OUT-- TO OVER-POWER THAT OF THE PLANET WRECKER--
--HIS MIND DOTH NIGH OVERWHELM MINE--

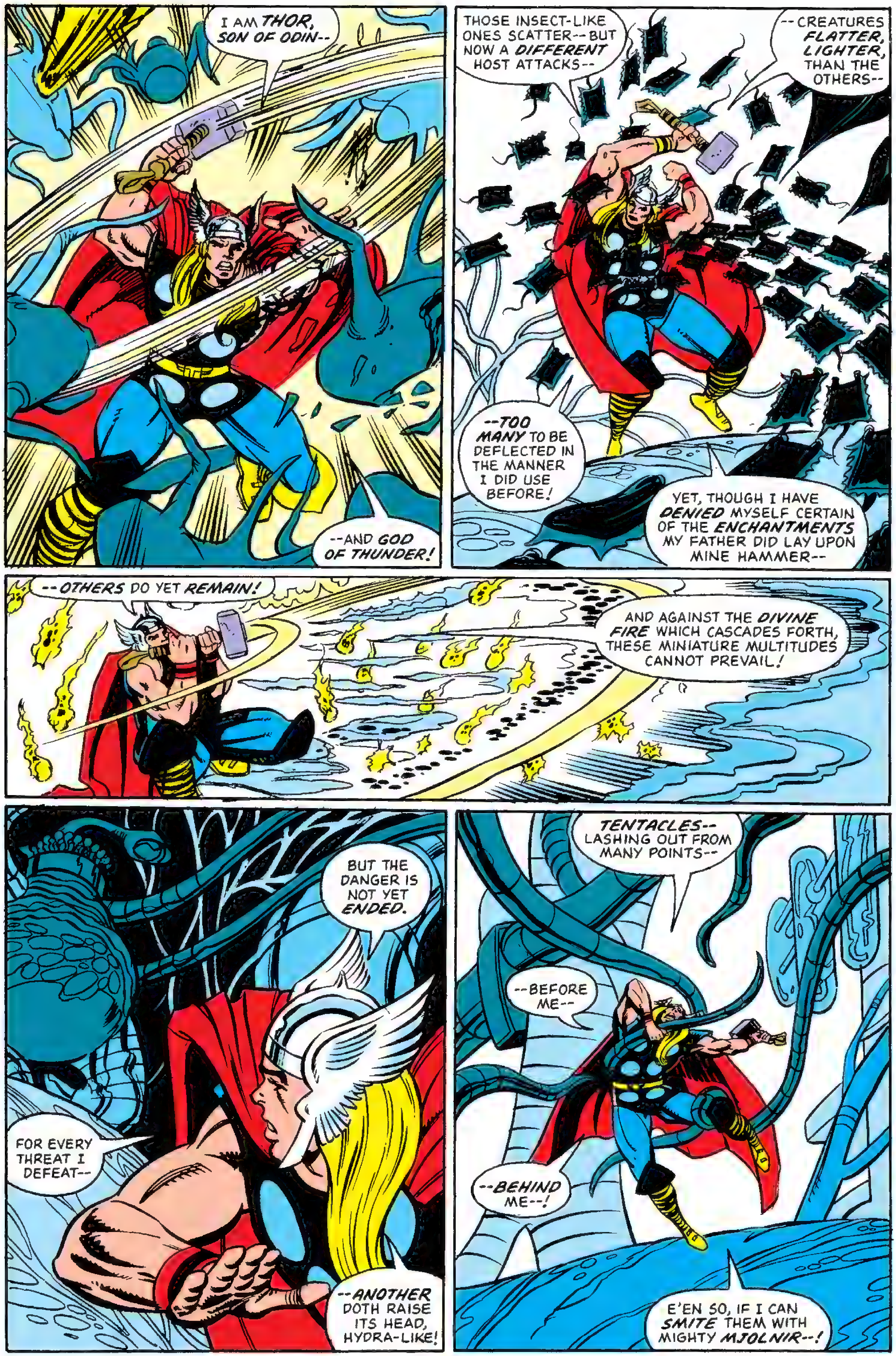

"I DO BEHOLD-- A *WORLD BESIEGED!*
"AN ALIEN PLANET--WHICH I DO NOT RECOGNIZE--IS *BOMBARDED* BY LIGHT BEAMS OF STULTIFYING *POWER*--
"FLOODING IT WITH *IMAGES* OUT OF *TIME'S ABYSS!*
"--STRIKING FROM AFAR OFF IN *SPACE.*
"AND NOW, THOSE WHO LAUNCHED THAT BOMBARDMENT DO *LAND* UPON THAT EMBATTLED SPHERE.
"BY SLEIPNIR'S EIGHT HOOVES! THE ATTACKERS ARE-- THE *CELESTIALS!*
"THEY HAVE COME TO GRIND THIS WORLD BENEATH THEIR GIGANTIC HEEL, BECAUSE OF ITS BANEFUL THIRST FOR *COSMIC CONQUEST.*
"AGAINST THEIR VAST POWER, THIS NAMELESS RACE IS *HELPLESS.*
"FAR BELOW, IT'S LEADERS FEEL THE SURFACE *TREMBLE*-- AND KNOW THEY MUST SOON *PERISH* FOR THEIR SINS.
"BUT SUCH IS THE INBORN *EVIL* OF THIS RACE-- AN EVIL RECOGNIZED EVEN BY *THOSE WHOSE TALE THIS IS*--
"--THAT THEY LABOR, IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH, TO CREATE THE ULTIMATE *REVENGERS* OF THEIR JUSTLY DESERVED DOOM.
"AND THERE, IN THEIR FINAL MOMENTS OF LIFE-- THEY *ACHIEVE* WHAT THEY DESIRE:
"A CULTURE OF TINY *MICROBES*-- A NEW FORM OF LIFE NOT BASED ON CARBON.
"THEY CALL THEM *TERMINI*--
"--FOR THEY ARE MEANT TO BRING THE *END* OF THE CELESTIALS' DREAM OF A STRUCTURED, PEACEFUL UNIVERSE.
"SENSING THIS DAY WOULD COME, THE ALIENS HAD PREPARED A MEANS OF PROPELLING THE *TERMINI-MICROBES* SAFELY OUT OF THE HATED ADVERSARY...

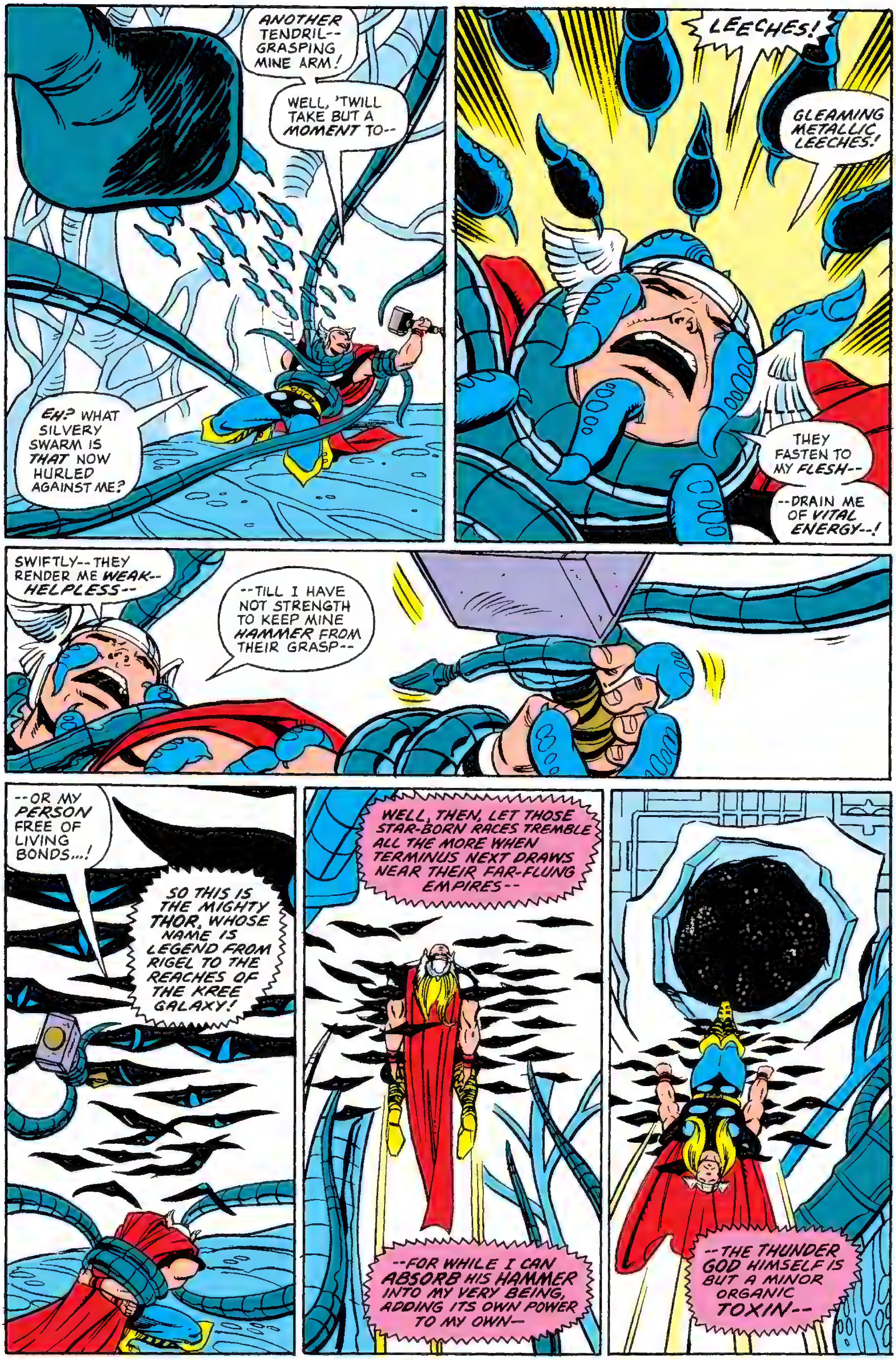

"THUS, IN THE INSTANT BEFORE THE LAST BASTION OF THEIR CIVILIZATION WAS *BURIED* BENEATH MEGA-TONS OF ROCK AND RUBBLE--
"--THEY SENT THEIR PRECIOUS BURDEN *SKYWARD.*
"IN THE FLUSH OF VICTORY, THE *CELESTIALS* FAILED TO SPY ITS SWIFT ASCENT--
"--AS THEY BEGAN THEIR GRIM TASK OF SOWING THE PLANET'S SOIL AND ATMOSPHERE WITH *DEADLY POISONS*--
"--SO THAT *NOTHING* WOULD LIVE THERE, E'ER AGAIN!
"UNKNOWN TO THEM, HOWEVER, *ONE* LIVING THING SPAWNED THERE HAD INDEED *ESCAPED* THE DESOLATION.
"FOR UNCOUNTED CENTURIES, IT HURTLED THROUGH THE DARKSOME ETHER--
"--TO CRASH, AT LENGTH, UPON A *PLANET WITH NO NAME.*
"THERE, THE MICROBES BROKE FREE-- *MULTIPLIED*-- EVOLVING INTO EVER MORE *COMPLEX* FORMS OF LIFE-- TILL, AFTER MANY AN AGE--
"--THEY HAD PAINFULLY BECOME THAT WHICH THE LONG-DEAD PARENT RACE HAD *INTENDED* THEY SHOULD BE:
"*TERMINUS, DESPOILER OF PLANETS*--
"--A METAL MONSTROSITY CONCEIVED WITH AN *INBRED HATRED* OF THE *CELESTIALS* AND ALL THEIR WORKS!

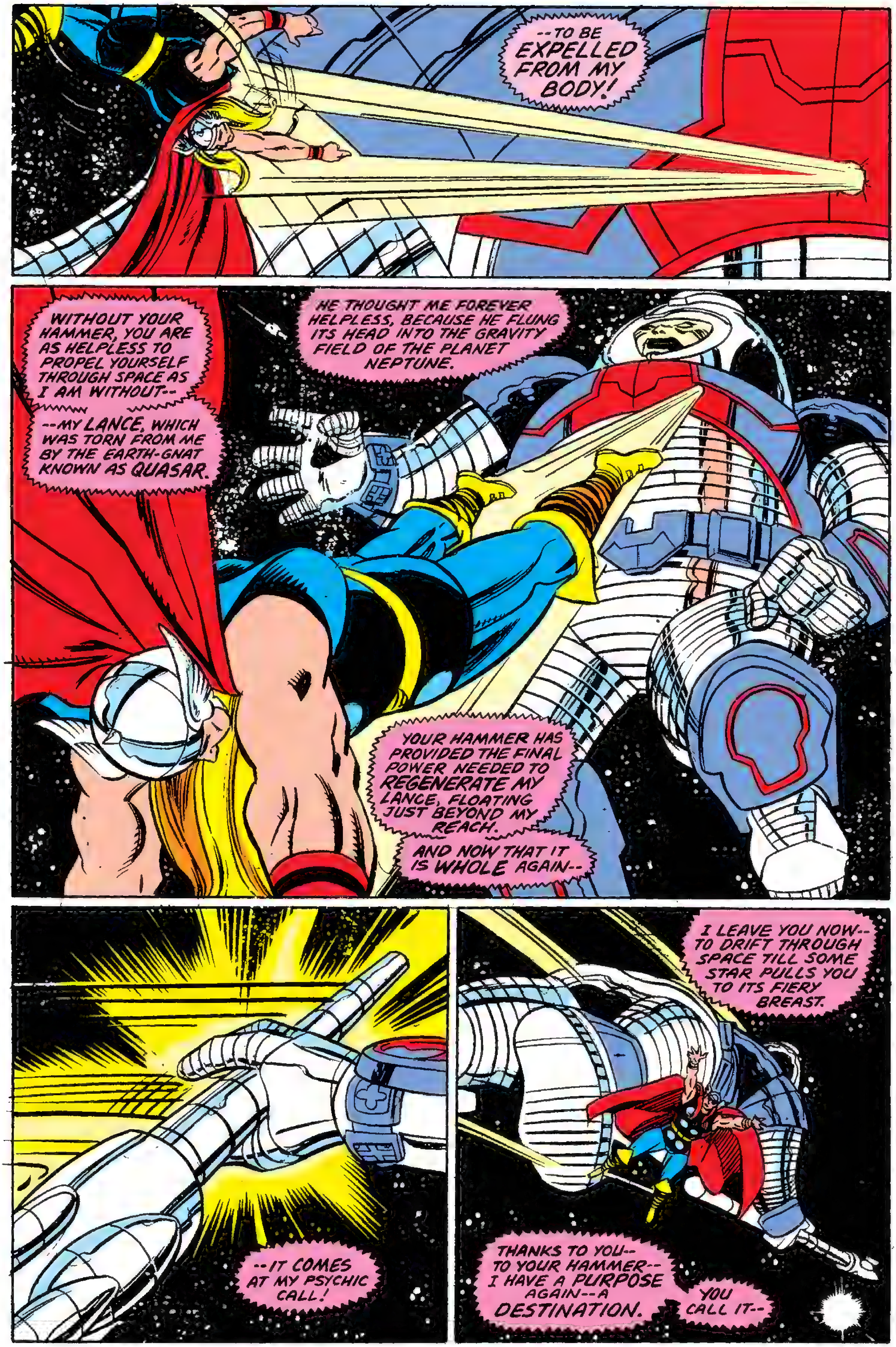

"WHENEVER HE FOUND A WORLD *SPARED* BY THE CELESTIALS' COSMIC JUDGMENTS, TERMINUS DID *ROB* IT OF... CERTAIN THINGS.
"IN TIME, ONE SUCH PLANET'S *LAST SURVIVOR* LURED HIM TO *EARTH,* HOPING ITS *HEROES* MIGHT HALT HIS MARCH OF TERROR.
"'TWAS *REED RICHARDS* WHO FULFILLED THAT ALIEN'S DYING PRAYER--
"--WITH A DEVICE WHICH DROVE TERMINUS DEEP INTO THE *MOLTEN BOWELS* OF THE GLOBE--
"--LEAVING BEHIND HIS PRECIOUS *LANCE,* THE SOURCE OF HIS PROPULSION THROUGH SPACE.
"BUT NEITHER RAGING *HEAT* NOR AWESOME *PRESSURE* COULD HARM THAT FINAL PRODUCT OF A VENGEFUL SPECIES.
"NAY, RATHER, HE BEGAN AT ONCE TO CLAW HIS WAY BACK TOWARD THE EARTH'S MORE PLACID *FACE.*
"YET, NEAR THE SURFACE, HE MADE A *DISCOVERY* MOST STARTLING...
"...THE LABORATORY OF *JORRO,* WEAPONS-MAKER TO THE *DEVIANTS.*
"IN THEIR WAY, THAT LOATHSOME RACE *HATED* THE CELESTIALS AS FIERCELY AS DID TERMINUS.
"THUS, JORRO WAS PERSUADED TO *DUPLICATE* TERMINUS'S ARMOR--AND *WEAR* IT TO THE SURFACE IN SEARCH OF THE GIANT'S *LANCE.*
"WHEN THE DEVIANT *PERISHED* IN HIS MISSION--
"--TERMINUS, BELOW, WITHDREW FROM HIS CHEST CAVITY THE *PLUNDER* OF MANY NOW-DEAD SPHERES:
"THEIR *TECHNOLOGY*--THEIR FORMS OF *LIFE*--THE VERY *ELEMENTS* WHICH HAD COMPOSED THEM.
"THE *ESSENCE* OF THESE THINGS WAS FED INTO A *DEVIANT APPARATUS* HE HAD DULY MODIFIED...

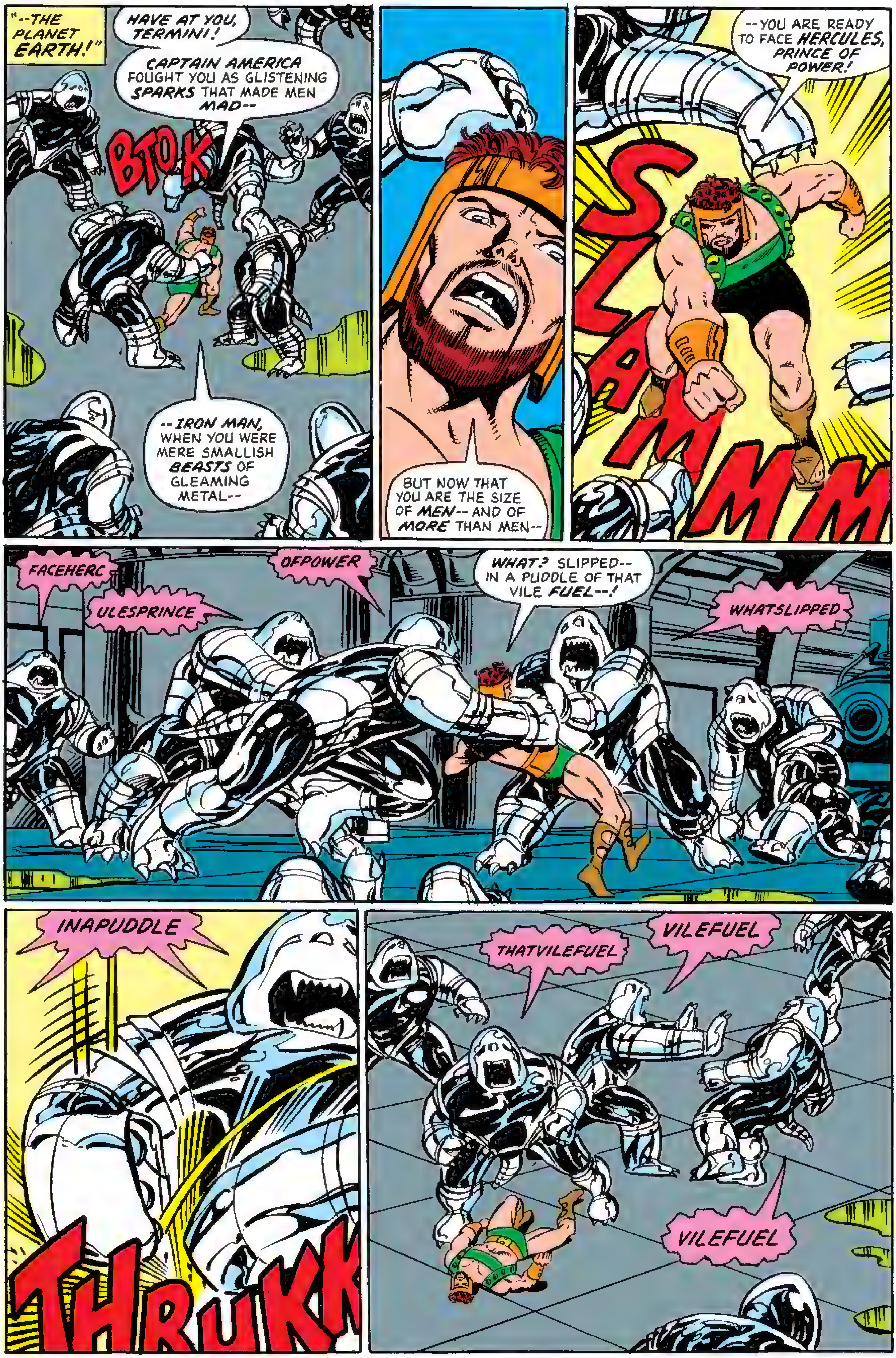

"THE TIME HAD COME--UPON **THIS** WORLD, OUT OF ALL THOSE HE HAD DEVASTATED--
"--FOR TERMINUS TO BEGIN TO **REPLICATE** HIMSELF!
"HIS DYING CREATORS HAD ENVISIONED TERMINUS AS BUT THE **FIRST, CRUCIAL STEP** UPON THEIR ROAD OF REVENGE.
"THE **MICROBES** FROM WHICH HE HAD EVOLVED HAD BEEN DESIGNED TO CREATE **YET MORE** MICROBES--AYE, MICROBES BY THE UNCOUNTED **MILLIONS**--
"--THE GERMINAL FORM OF A **SECOND-GENERATION OF TERMINI**--
"--CREATURES COMPOSED, AS WAS TERMINUS HIMSELF, OF **LIVING, ELEMENTAL TECHNOLOGY!**
"AFTER SOME MONTHS, THE NEW **TERMINI-MICROBES** WERE READY...THOUGH **DORMANT.**
"TERMINUS SENSED THAT, IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME, THEIR **INBORN INSTINCT** WOULD WAKE THEM--
"--AND SEND THEM ON THEIR **OWN** CLIMB SURFACEWARD.
"UNTIL THAT MOMENT--
"--THEY WOULD GESTATE **HERE,** IN DARK AND UNSEEN SPLENDOR.
"MANY OF HIS SPAWN WOULD **PERISH,** HE KNEW--BUT THEIR **NUMBER** WAS SO GREAT, SO LEGION, THAT MANY MORE WOULD SURVIVE--GROW--EVEN **THRIVE**--
"--AND A GRIM **DESTINY** DECREED MILLENNIA BEFORE WOULD AT LAST COME TO **FRUITION!**
"A MOMENT MORE, AND TERMINUS PLUNGED **UPWARD** AGAIN--
"--CERTAIN THAT EVEN WERE **HE** DEFEATED BY THE **SUPER-BEINGS** WHO PROTECTED THE EARTH--
"--THE **TERMINI** WOULD LIVE ON--
"--TO WREAK A **TERRIBLE RETRIBUTION** UPON THE **CELESTIALS**--BY DEVASTATING THE **EARTH,** AND **EVERY** WORLD THEY HAD DEIGNED TO **SPARE.**

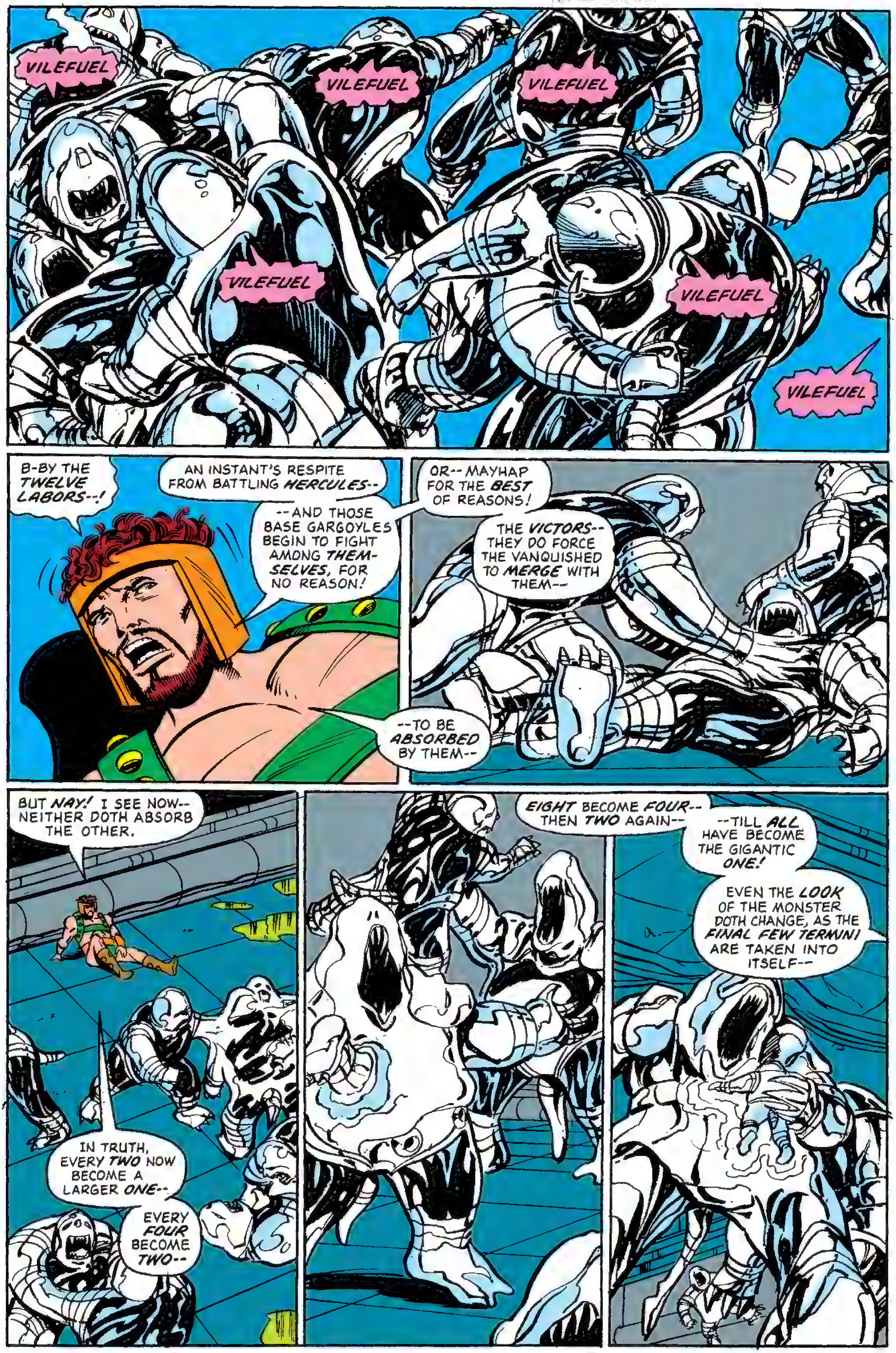

THEN--THERE WAS FAR MORE TO TERMINUS THAN YOUNG QUASAR DID LEARN FROM HIS COSMIC MENTOR, EON.
I DID SUSPECT SOME PART OF IT, BECAUSE OF WHAT DID BEFALL IRON MAN AND CAPTAIN AMERICA...
YES, CLEARLY TERMINUS WAS NEVER A MERE DESTROYER, AS WE DID BELIEVE--
--BUT THE PRECURSOR OF A NEW RACE--
--ONE SPAWNED BY A DYING PEOPLE'S MAD LUST FOR REVENGE!
AND THE EARTH WOULD BE THE FIRST TO FEEL ITS WRATH!
HOLD! SOMETHING OMINOUS THIS WAY COMES!
--SOMETHING THAT SHOWERS ME WITH-- ARRRH!
THIS STINGING VENOM WAS NEVER BIRTHED IN THE GLANDS OF MORTAL ADDERS!
OF COURSE! I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN!
TERMINUS IS A BEING OF ORGANIC METAL--
--AND HIS INNER REACHES WOULD BE GUARDED BY LIKE CREATURES--
--WHO COME AGAINST ME, MUCH AS BLOOD CORPUSCLES DO BATTLE WITH AUGHT THAT INVADES A HUMAN BODY.
TO THESE METALLIC HORDES, I AM ONLY A DISEASE WHICH HATH SOMEHOW PENETRATED THEIR MASTER'S SHIELDING ARMOR!
BUT I AM MORE THAN A MERE UNWELCOME INTRUDER.

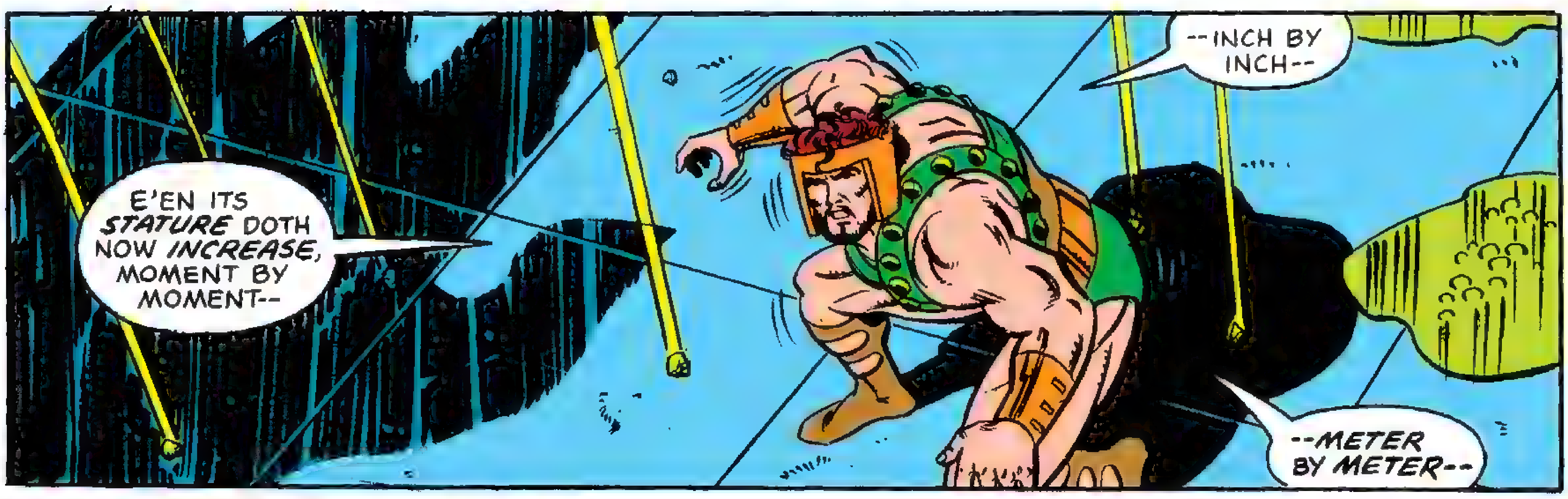

I AM **THOR, SON OF ODIN**--
--AND **GOD OF THUNDER!**
THOSE INSECT-LIKE ONES SCATTER--BUT NOW A **DIFFERENT** HOST ATTACKS--
--CREATURES **FLATTER, LIGHTER,** THAN THE OTHERS--
--**TOO MANY** TO BE DEFLECTED IN THE MANNER I DID USE BEFORE!
YET, THOUGH I HAVE **DENIED** MYSELF CERTAIN OF THE **ENCHANTMENTS** MY FATHER DID LAY UPON MINE HAMMER--
--**OTHERS** DO YET **REMAIN!**
AND AGAINST THE **DIVINE FIRE** WHICH CASCADES FORTH, THESE MINIATURE MULTITUDES CANNOT PREVAIL!
BUT THE DANGER IS NOT YET **ENDED.**
FOR EVERY THREAT I DEFEAT--
--**ANOTHER** DOTH RAISE ITS HEAD, HYDRA-LIKE!
TENTACLES--LASHING OUT FROM MANY POINTS--
--BEFORE ME--
--**BEHIND** ME--!
E'EN SO, IF I CAN **SMITE** THEM WITH MIGHTY **MJOLNIR**--!

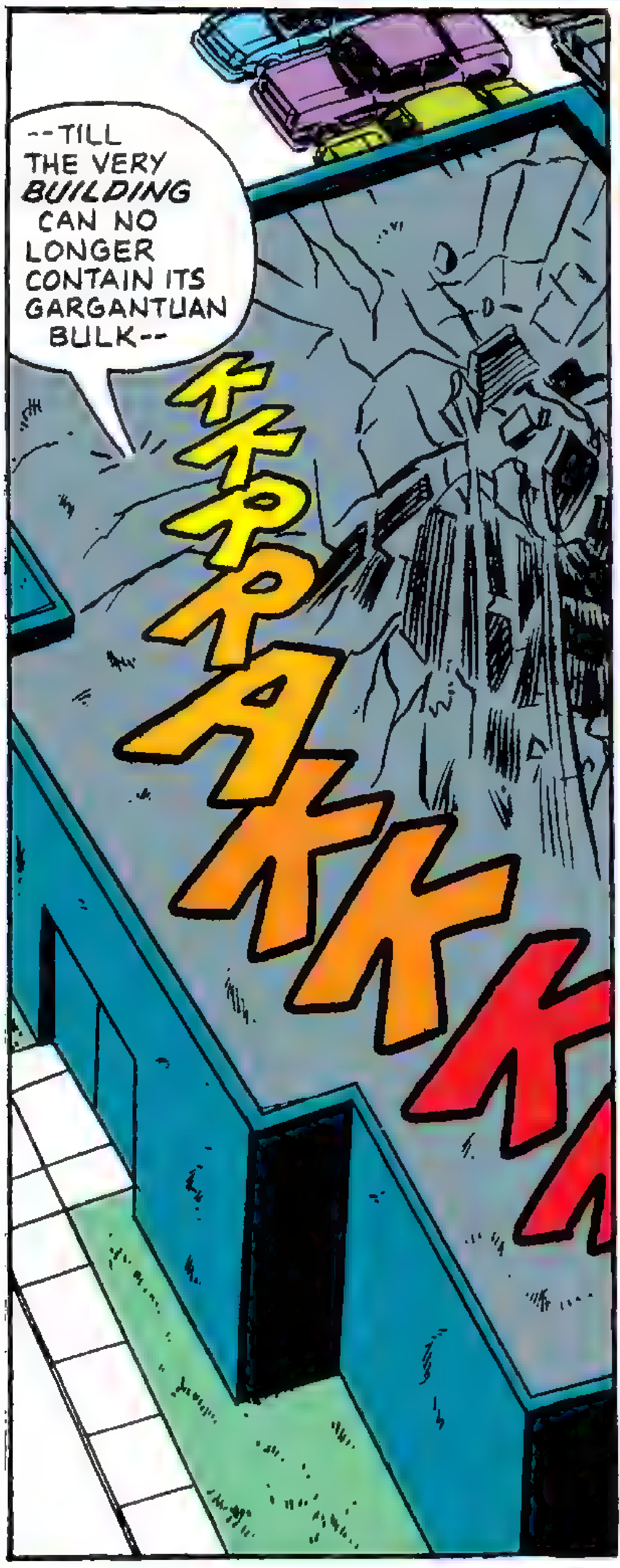

ANOTHER TENDRIL-- GRASPING MINE ARM!
WELL, 'TWILL TAKE BUT A MOMENT TO--
EH? WHAT SILVERY SWARM IS THAT NOW HURLED AGAINST ME?
LEECHES!
GLEAMING METALLIC LEECHES!
THEY FASTEN TO MY FLESH--
--DRAIN ME OF VITAL ENERGY--!
SWIFTLY-- THEY RENDER ME WEAK-- HELPLESS--
--TILL I HAVE NOT STRENGTH TO KEEP MINE HAMMER FROM THEIR GRASP--
--OR MY PERSON FREE OF LIVING BONDS...!
SO THIS IS THE MIGHTY THOR, WHOSE NAME IS LEGEND FROM RIGEL TO THE REACHES OF THE KREE GALAXY!
WELL, THEN, LET THOSE STAR-BORN RACES TREMBLE ALL THE MORE WHEN TERMINUS NEXT DRAWS NEAR THEIR FAR-FLUNG EMPIRES--
--FOR WHILE I CAN ABSORB HIS HAMMER INTO MY VERY BEING, ADDING ITS OWN POWER TO MY OWN--
--THE THUNDER GOD HIMSELF IS BUT A MINOR ORGANIC TOXIN--

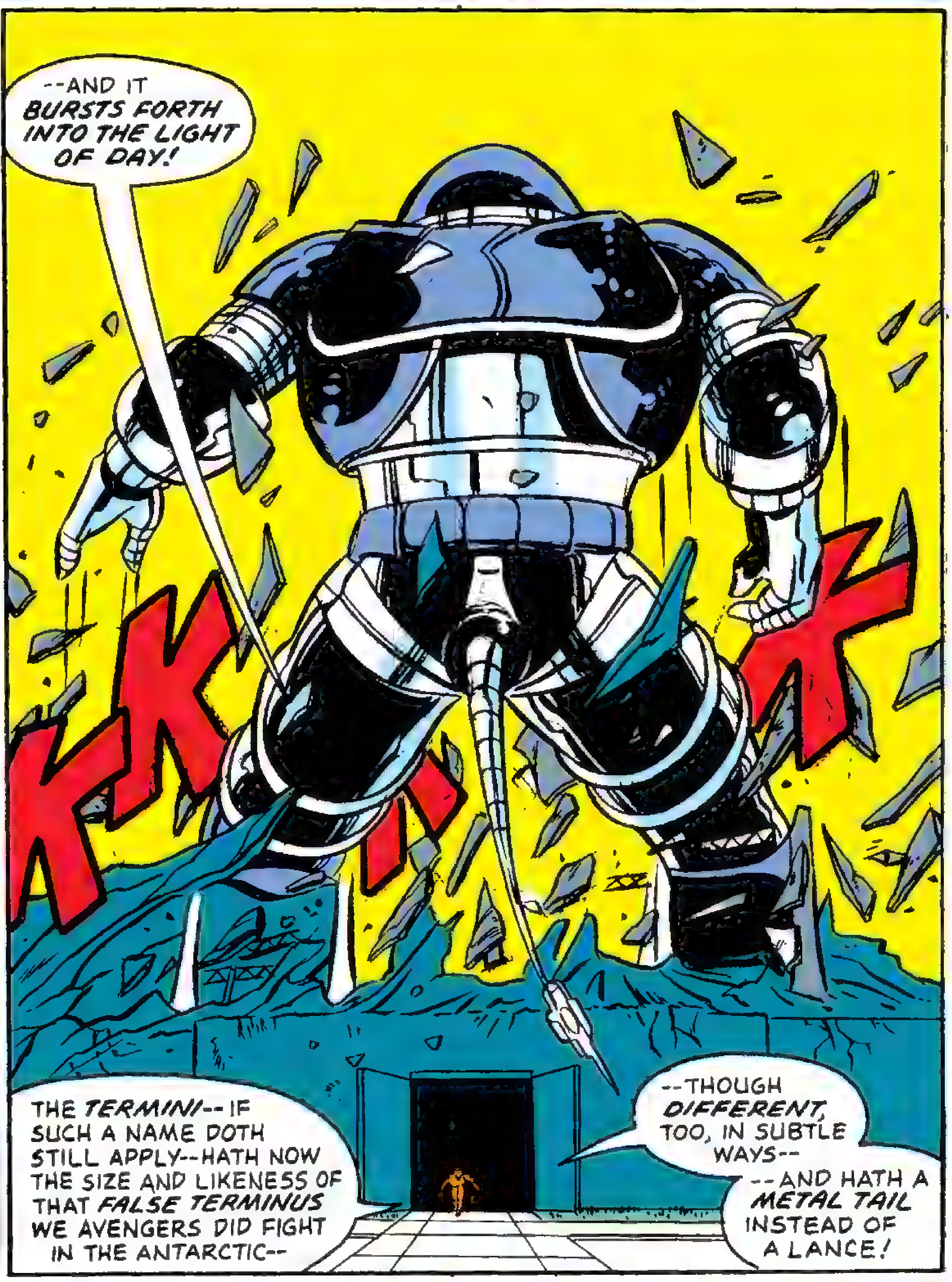

--TO BE EXPELLED FROM MY BODY!
WITHOUT YOUR HAMMER, YOU ARE AS HELPLESS TO PROPEL YOURSELF THROUGH SPACE AS I AM WITHOUT--
--MY LANCE, WHICH WAS TORN FROM ME BY THE EARTH-GNAT KNOWN AS QUASAR.
HE THOUGHT ME FOREVER HELPLESS, BECAUSE HE FLUNG ITS HEAD INTO THE GRAVITY FIELD OF THE PLANET NEPTUNE.
YOUR HAMMER HAS PROVIDED THE FINAL POWER NEEDED TO REGENERATE MY LANCE, FLOATING JUST BEYOND MY REACH.
AND NOW THAT IT IS WHOLE AGAIN--
--IT COMES AT MY PSYCHIC CALL!
I LEAVE YOU NOW--TO DRIFT THROUGH SPACE TILL SOME STAR PULLS YOU TO ITS FIERY BREAST.
THANKS TO YOU--TO YOUR HAMMER--I HAVE A PURPOSE AGAIN--A DESTINATION.
YOU CALL IT--

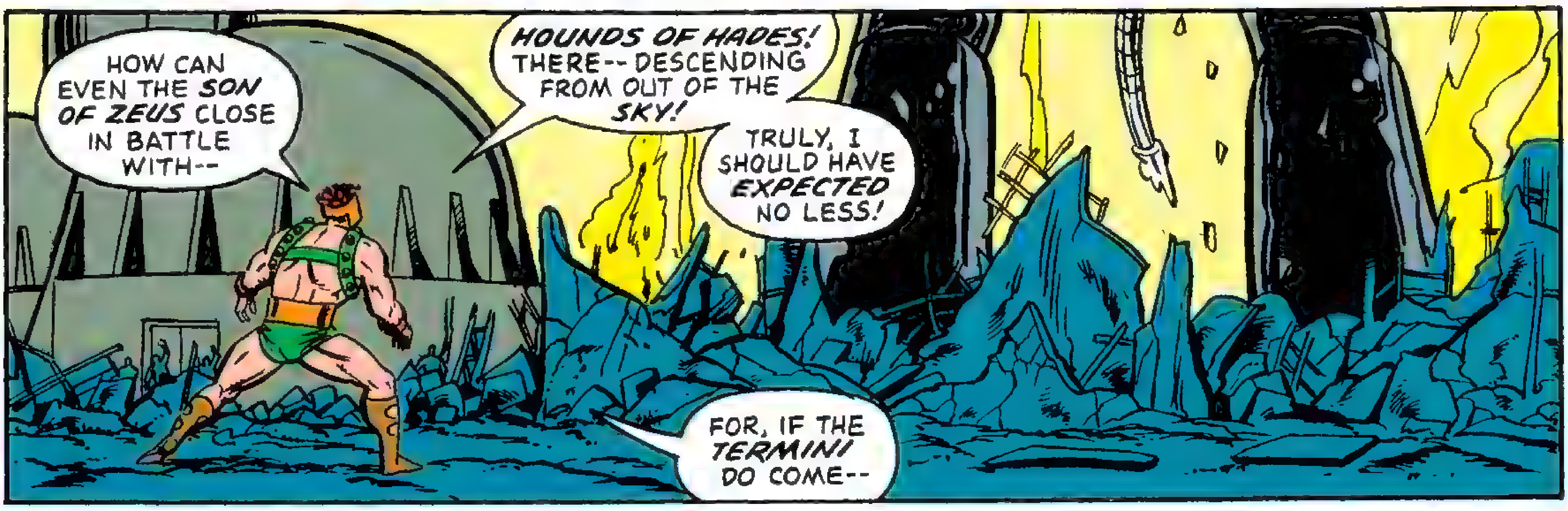

"--THE PLANET EARTH!"
HAVE AT YOU, TERMINI!
CAPTAIN AMERICA FOUGHT YOU AS GLISTENING SPARKS THAT MADE MEN MAD--
BTOK
--IRON MAN, WHEN YOU WERE MERE SMALLISH BEASTS OF GLEAMING METAL--
BUT NOW THAT YOU ARE THE SIZE OF MEN-- AND OF MORE THAN MEN--
--YOU ARE READY TO FACE HERCULES, PRINCE OF POWER!
SLAMMM
FACEHERC
ULESPRINCE
OFPOWER
WHAT? SLIPPED-- IN A PUDDLE OF THAT VILE FUEL--!
WHATSLIPPED
INAPUDDLE
THRUKK
THATVILEFUEL
VILEFUEL
VILEFUEL

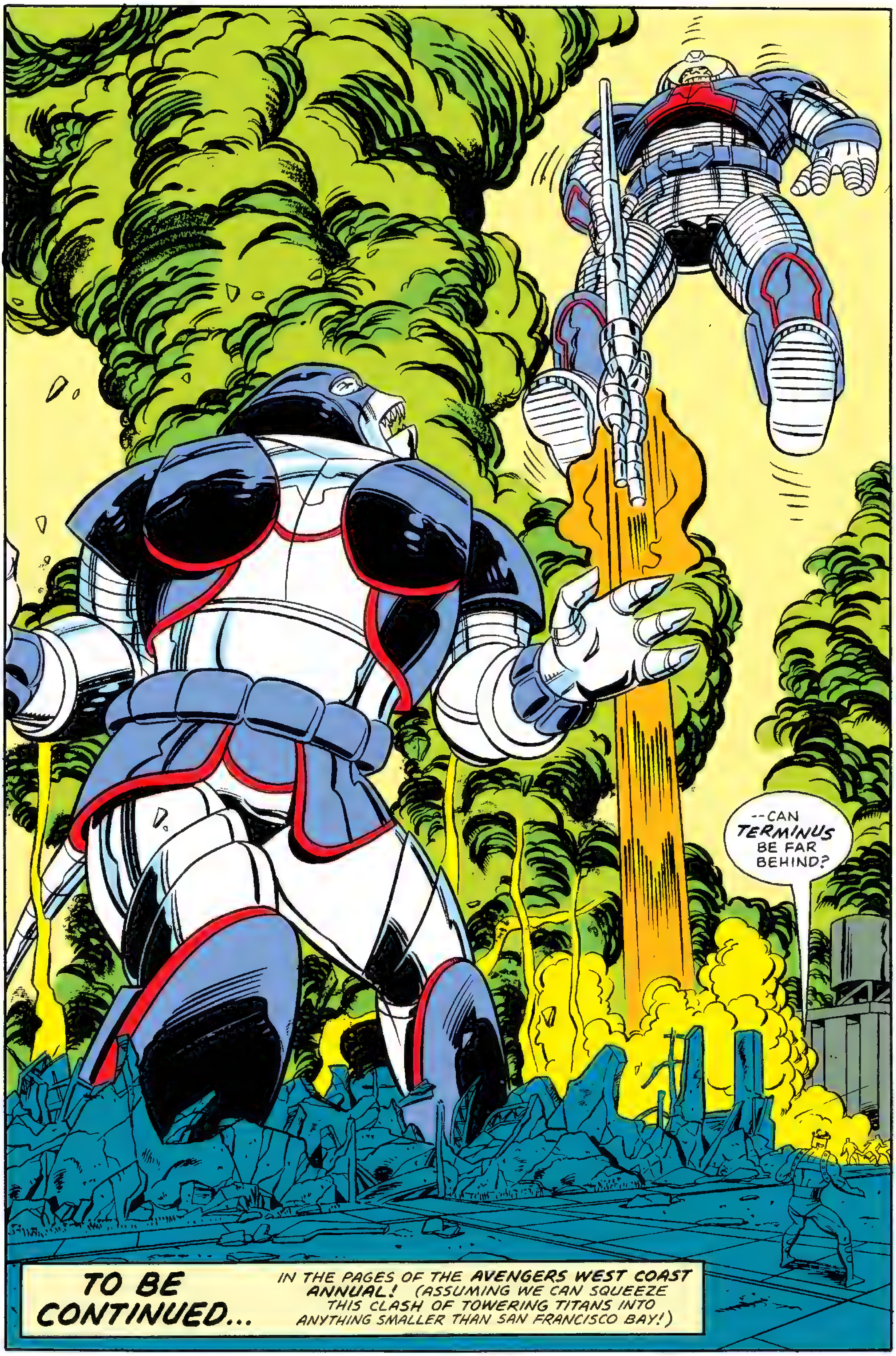

VILEFUEL
VILEFUEL
VILEFUEL
VILEFUEL
VILEFUEL
VILEFUEL
B-BY THE *TWELVE LABORS*--!
AN INSTANT'S RESPITE FROM BATTLING *HERCULES*--
--AND THOSE BASE GARGOYLES BEGIN TO FIGHT AMONG *THEMSELVES*, FOR NO REASON!
OR--MAYHAP FOR THE *BEST* OF REASONS!
THE *VICTORS*--THEY DO FORCE THE VANQUISHED TO *MERGE* WITH THEM--
--TO BE *ABSORBED* BY THEM--
BUT *NAY!* I SEE NOW--NEITHER DOTH ABSORB THE OTHER.
IN TRUTH, EVERY *TWO* NOW BECOME A LARGER *ONE*--
EVERY *FOUR* BECOME *TWO*--
EIGHT BECOME *FOUR*--THEN *TWO* AGAIN--
--TILL *ALL* HAVE BECOME THE GIGANTIC *ONE!*
EVEN THE *LOOK* OF THE MONSTER DOTH CHANGE, AS THE *FINAL FEW TERMINI* ARE TAKEN INTO ITSELF--


E'EN ITS *STATURE* DOTH NOW *INCREASE,* MOMENT BY MOMENT--
--INCH BY INCH--
--METER BY METER--

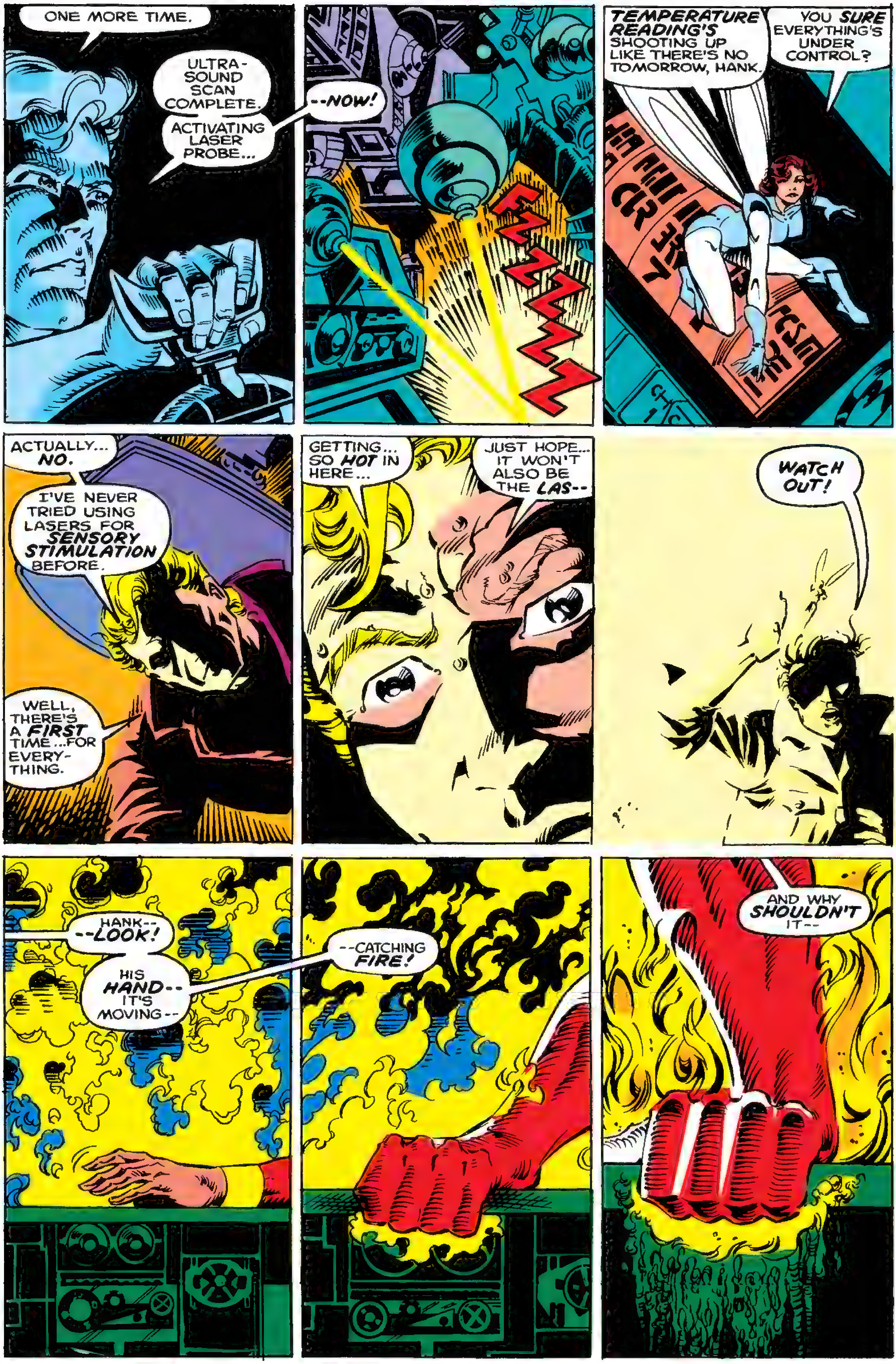

--TILL THE VERY *BUILDING* CAN NO LONGER CONTAIN ITS GARGANTUAN BULK--
KRRAKKKKK

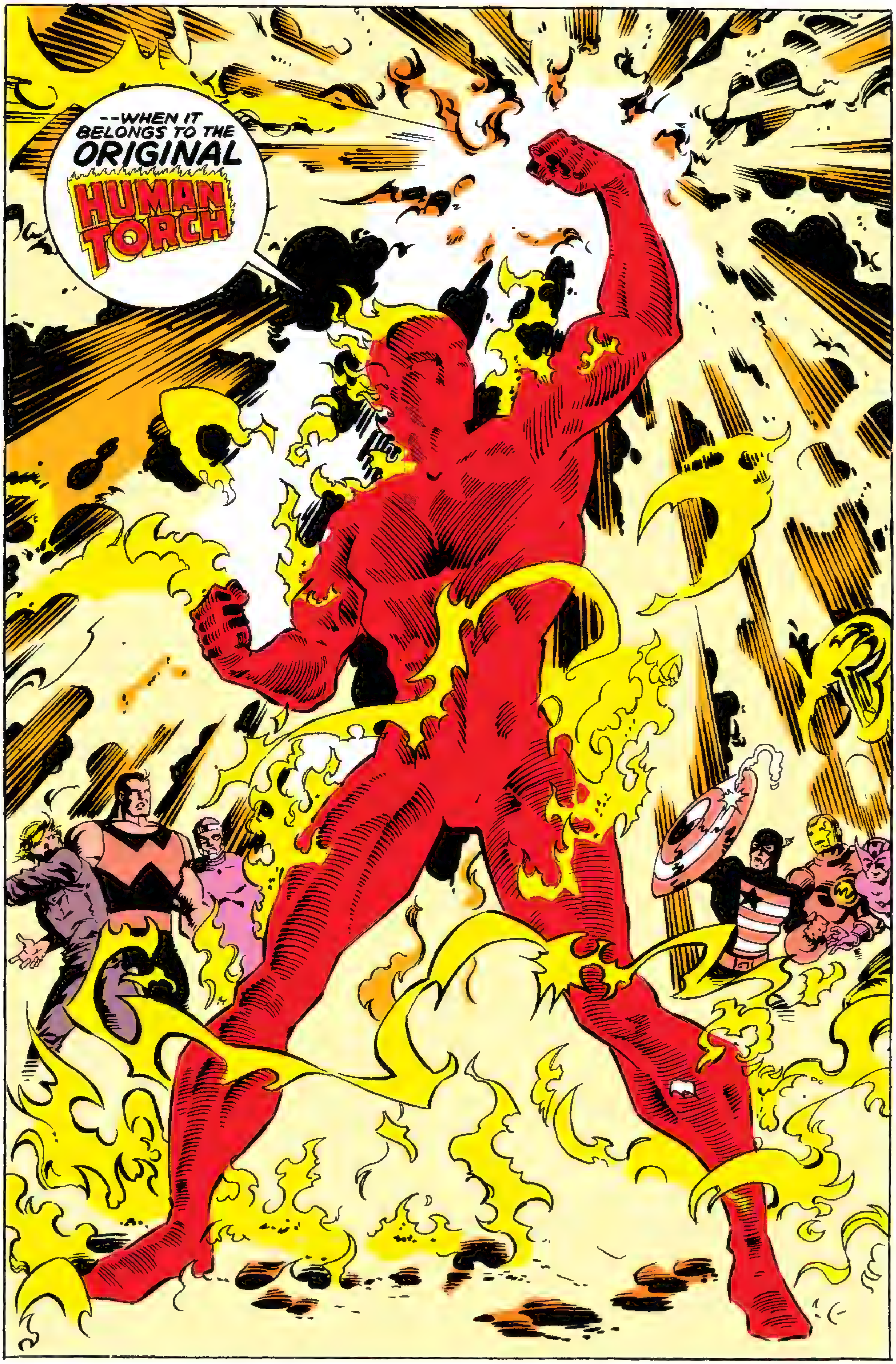

--AND IT *BURSTS FORTH INTO THE LIGHT OF DAY!*
THE *TERMINI*--IF SUCH A NAME DOTH STILL APPLY--HATH NOW THE SIZE AND LIKENESS OF THAT *FALSE TERMINUS* WE AVENGERS DID FIGHT IN THE ANTARCTIC--
--THOUGH *DIFFERENT,* TOO, IN SUBTLE WAYS--
--AND HATH A *METAL TAIL* INSTEAD OF A LANCE!

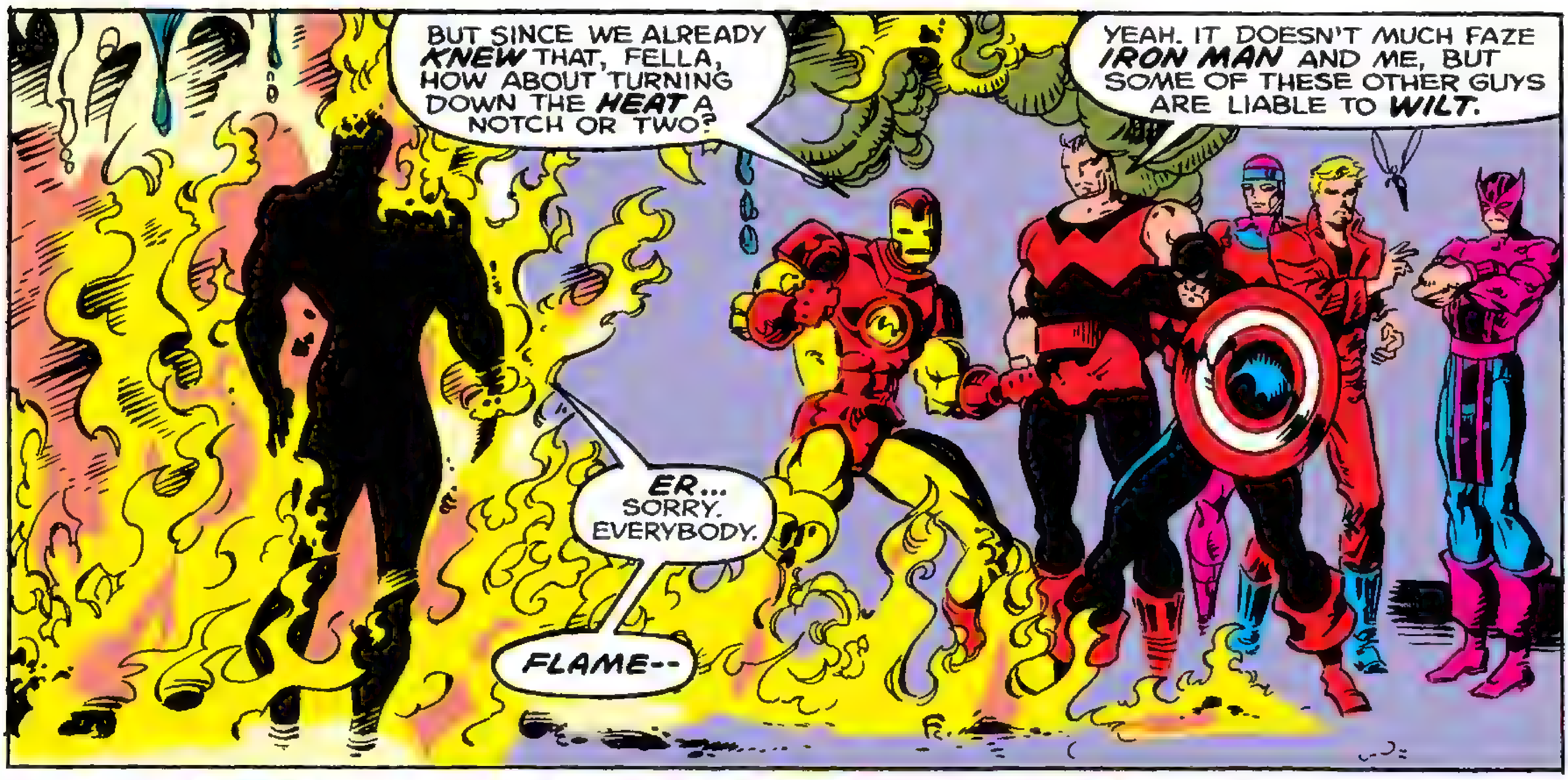

HOW CAN EVEN THE *SON OF ZEUS* CLOSE IN BATTLE WITH--
HOUNDS OF HADES! THERE--DESCENDING FROM OUT OF THE *SKY!*
TRULY, I SHOULD HAVE *EXPECTED* NO LESS!
FOR, IF THE *TERMINI* DO COME--

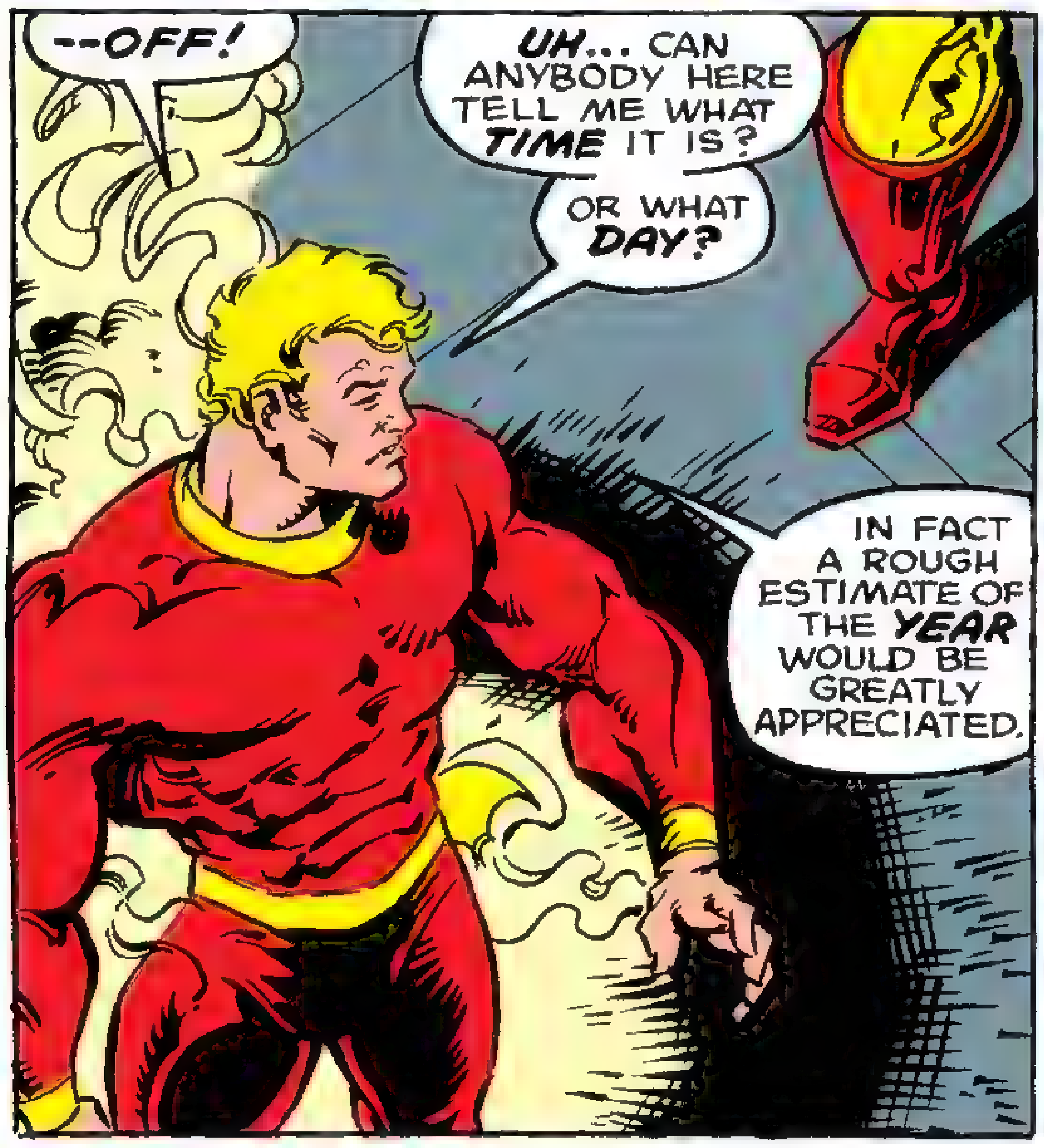

--CAN TERMINUS BE FAR BEHIND?
TO BE CONTINUED...
IN THE PAGES OF THE AVENGERS WEST COAST ANNUAL! (ASSUMING WE CAN SQUEEZE THIS CLASH OF TOWERING TITANS INTO ANYTHING SMALLER THAN SAN FRANCISCO BAY!)

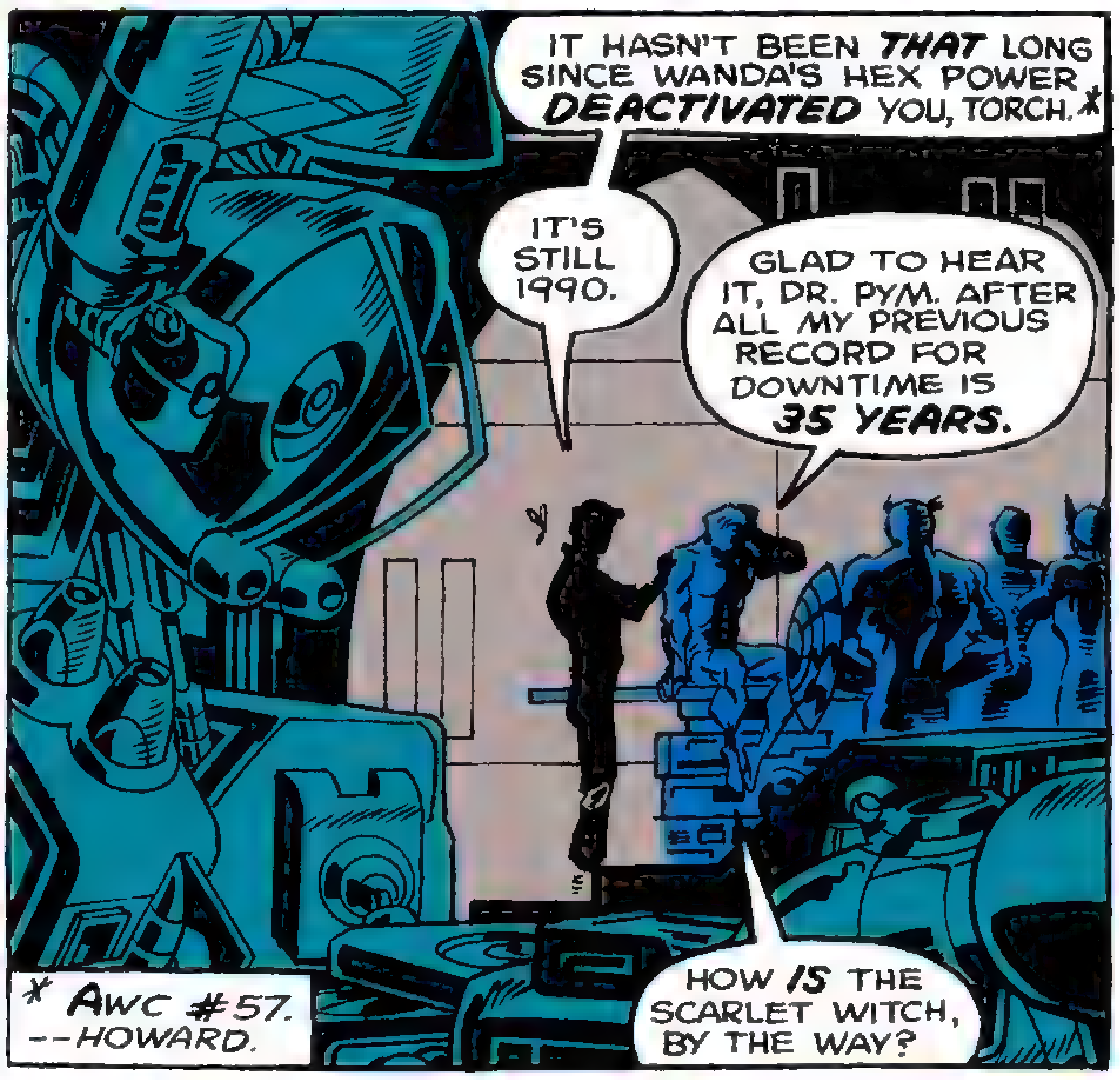
MARVEL ANNUAL
THE TERMINUS FACTOR
64 PAGES
PART FOUR OF FIVE
AVENGERS WEST COAST
AVENGERS WEST COAST 5 • 1990 02650
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
PLUS: FOUR OTHER THRILLING FEATURES!
YWOOD
WAR OF THE GARGANTUAS
MORGAN 3-90

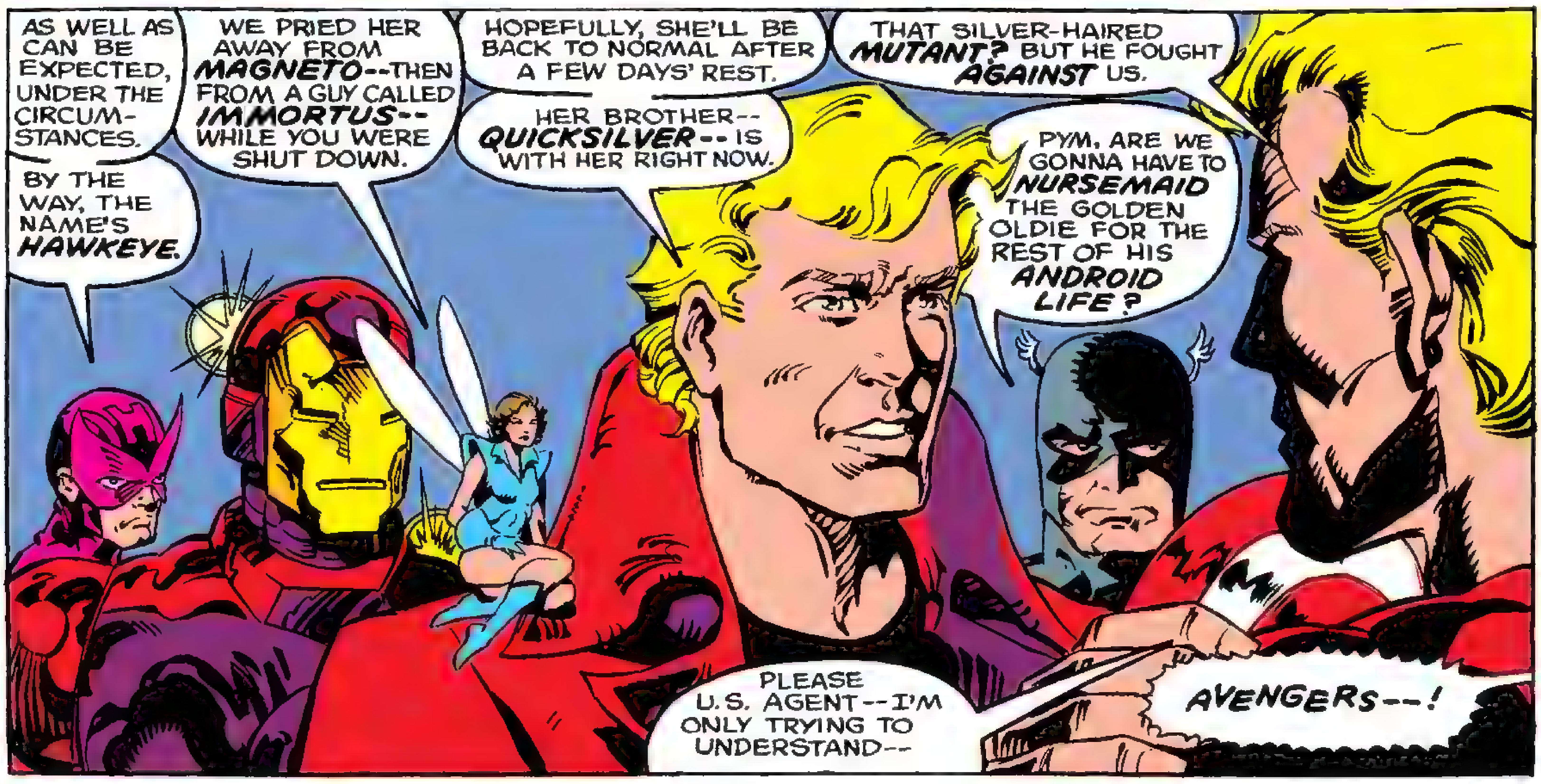

ONE MORE TIME.
ULTRA-SOUND SCAN COMPLETE.
ACTIVATING LASER PROBE...
--NOW!
FZZZZ
TEMPERATURE READING'S SHOOTING UP LIKE THERE'S NO TOMORROW, HANK.
YOU SURE EVERYTHING'S UNDER CONTROL?
ACTUALLY... NO.
I'VE NEVER TRIED USING LASERS FOR SENSORY STIMULATION BEFORE.
WELL, THERE'S A FIRST TIME ...FOR EVERY-THING.
GETTING... SO HOT IN HERE...
JUST HOPE... IT WON'T ALSO BE THE LAS--
WATCH OUT!
HANK-- --LOOK!
HIS HAND-- IT'S MOVING--
--CATCHING FIRE!
AND WHY SHOULDN'T IT--

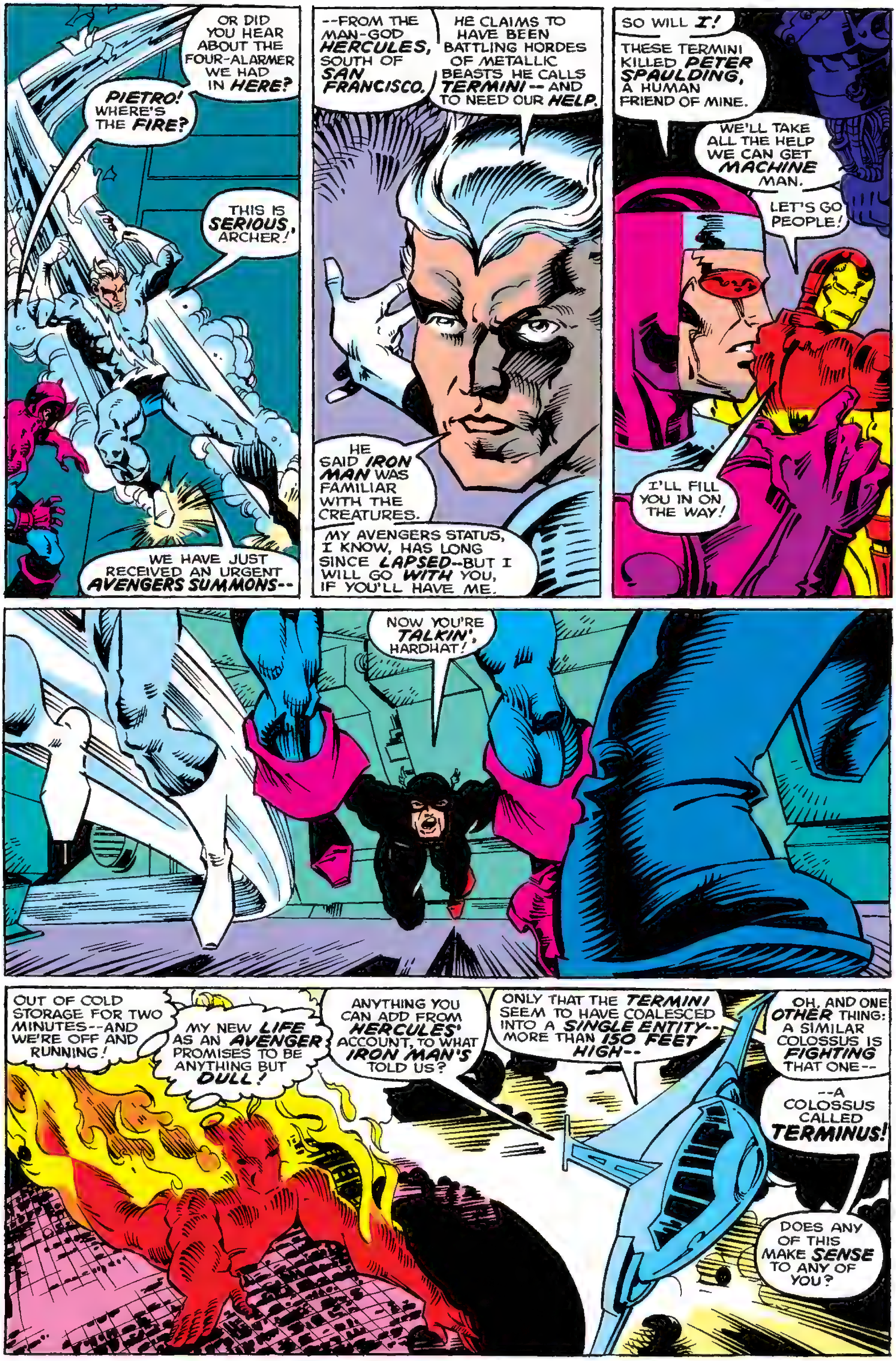

--WHEN IT BELONGS TO THE ORIGINAL HUMAN TORCH


BUT SINCE WE ALREADY *KNEW* THAT, FELLA, HOW ABOUT TURNING DOWN THE *HEAT* A NOTCH OR TWO?
YEAH. IT DOESN'T MUCH FAZE *IRON MAN* AND ME, BUT SOME OF THESE OTHER GUYS ARE LIABLE TO *WILT*.
ER... SORRY, EVERYBODY.
FLAME--


--OFF!
UH... CAN ANYBODY HERE TELL ME WHAT *TIME* IT IS?
OR WHAT *DAY?*
IN FACT A ROUGH ESTIMATE OF THE *YEAR* WOULD BE GREATLY APPRECIATED.


IT HASN'T BEEN *THAT* LONG SINCE WANDA'S HEX POWER *DEACTIVATED* YOU, TORCH.*
IT'S STILL 1990.
GLAD TO HEAR IT, DR. PYM. AFTER ALL MY PREVIOUS RECORD FOR DOWNTIME IS *35 YEARS.*
HOW *IS* THE SCARLET WITCH, BY THE WAY?
* AWC #57. --HOWARD.

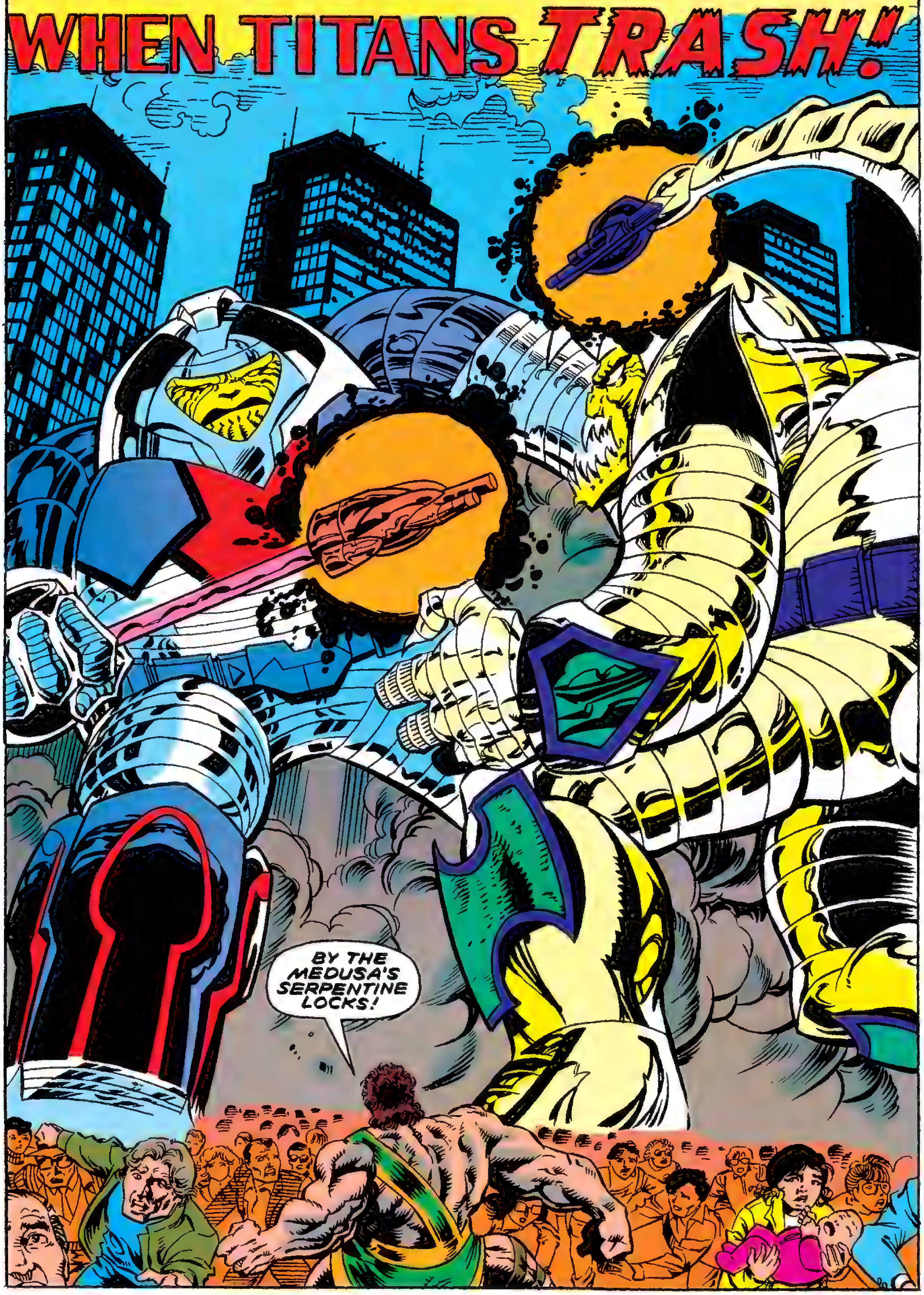

AS WELL AS CAN BE EXPECTED, UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES.
BY THE WAY, THE NAME'S *HAWKEYE.*
WE PRIED HER AWAY FROM *MAGNETO*--THEN FROM A GUY CALLED *IMMORTUS*--WHILE YOU WERE SHUT DOWN.
HOPEFULLY, SHE'LL BE BACK TO NORMAL AFTER A FEW DAYS' REST.
HER BROTHER--*QUICKSILVER*--IS WITH HER RIGHT NOW.
THAT SILVER-HAIRED *MUTANT?* BUT HE FOUGHT *AGAINST* US.
PYM, ARE WE GONNA HAVE TO *NURSEMAID* THE GOLDEN OLDIE FOR THE REST OF HIS *ANDROID LIFE?*
PLEASE U.S. AGENT--I'M ONLY TRYING TO UNDERSTAND--
AVENGERS--!

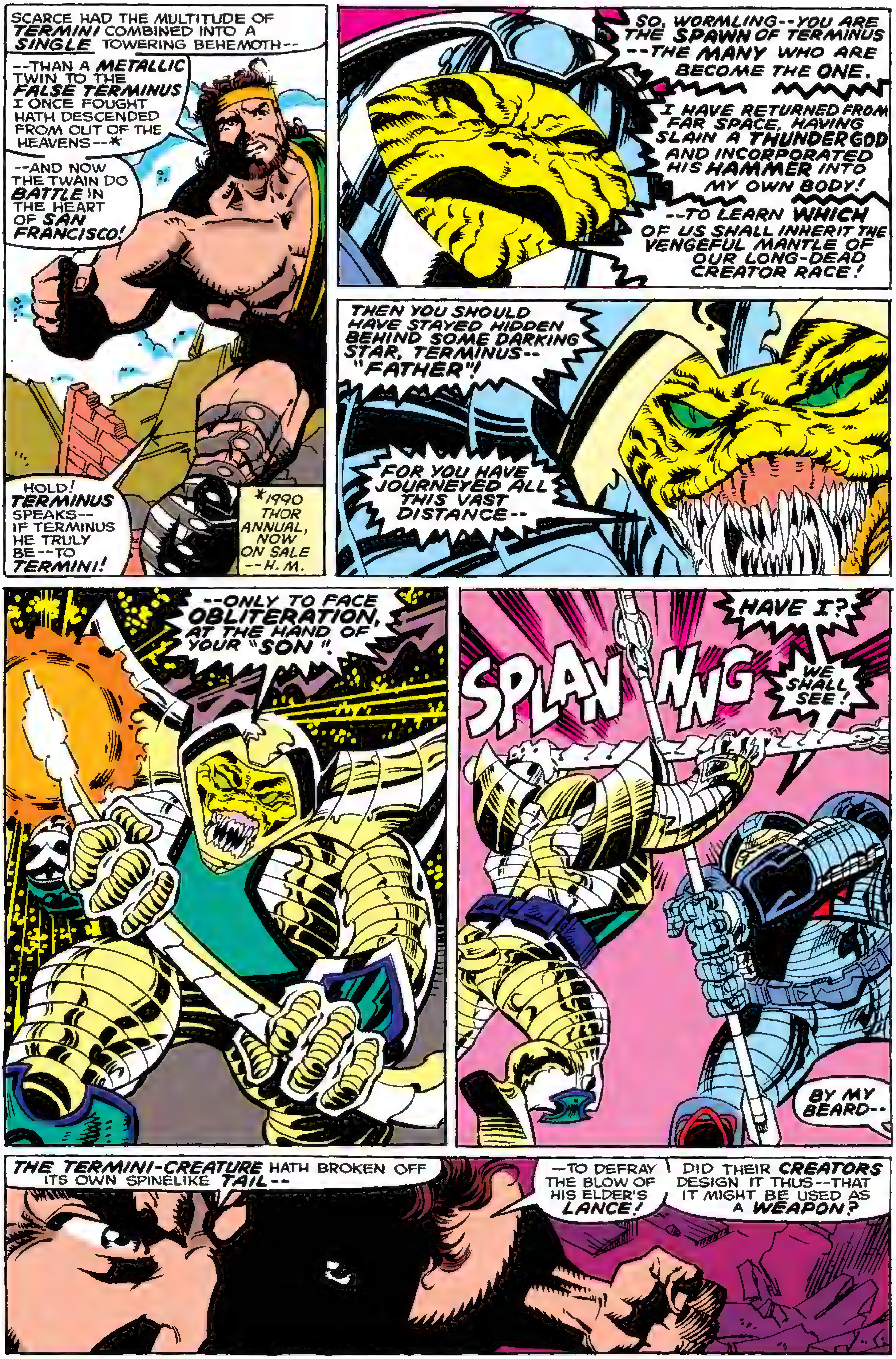

PIETRO! WHERE'S THE FIRE?
OR DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE FOUR-ALARMER WE HAD IN HERE?
THIS IS SERIOUS, ARCHER!
WE HAVE JUST RECEIVED AN URGENT AVENGERS SUMMONS--
--FROM THE MAN-GOD HERCULES, SOUTH OF SAN FRANCISCO.
HE CLAIMS TO HAVE BEEN BATTLING HORDES OF METALLIC BEASTS HE CALLS TERMINI -- AND TO NEED OUR HELP.
HE SAID IRON MAN WAS FAMILIAR WITH THE CREATURES.
MY AVENGERS STATUS, I KNOW, HAS LONG SINCE LAPSED--BUT I WILL GO WITH YOU, IF YOU'LL HAVE ME.
SO WILL I!
THESE TERMINI KILLED PETER SPAULDING, A HUMAN FRIEND OF MINE.
WE'LL TAKE ALL THE HELP WE CAN GET MACHINE MAN.
LET'S GO PEOPLE!
I'LL FILL YOU IN ON THE WAY!
NOW YOU'RE TALKIN', HARDHAT!
OUT OF COLD STORAGE FOR TWO MINUTES--AND WE'RE OFF AND RUNNING!
MY NEW LIFE AS AN AVENGER PROMISES TO BE ANYTHING BUT DULL!
ANYTHING YOU CAN ADD FROM HERCULES' ACCOUNT, TO WHAT IRON MAN'S TOLD US?
ONLY THAT THE TERMINI SEEM TO HAVE COALESCED INTO A SINGLE ENTITY--MORE THAN 150 FEET HIGH--
OH, AND ONE OTHER THING: A SIMILAR COLOSSUS IS FIGHTING THAT ONE--
--A COLOSSUS CALLED TERMINUS!
DOES ANY OF THIS MAKE SENSE TO ANY OF YOU?

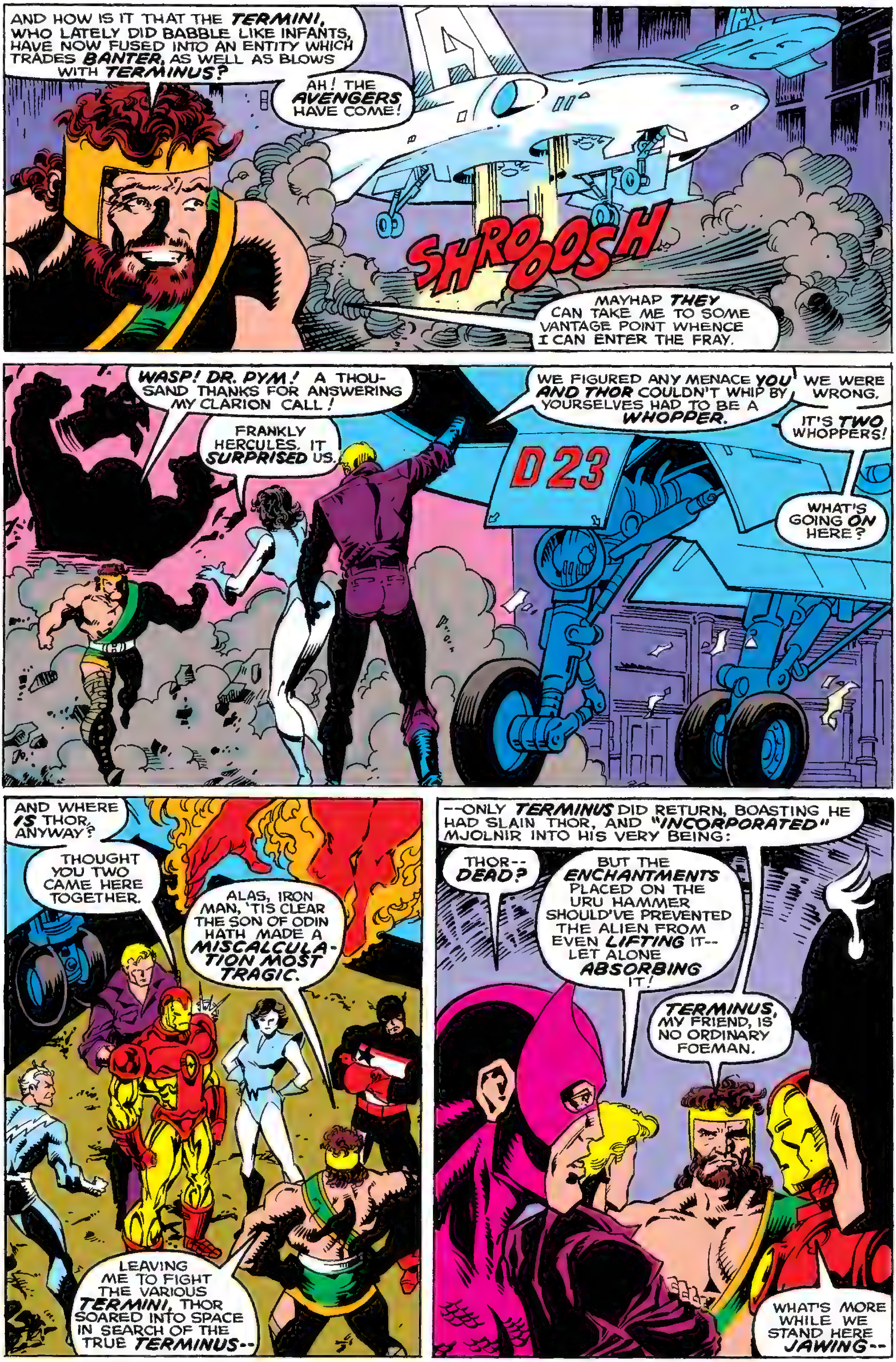
STAN LEE PRESENTS: **THE TERMINUS FACTOR** PART IV

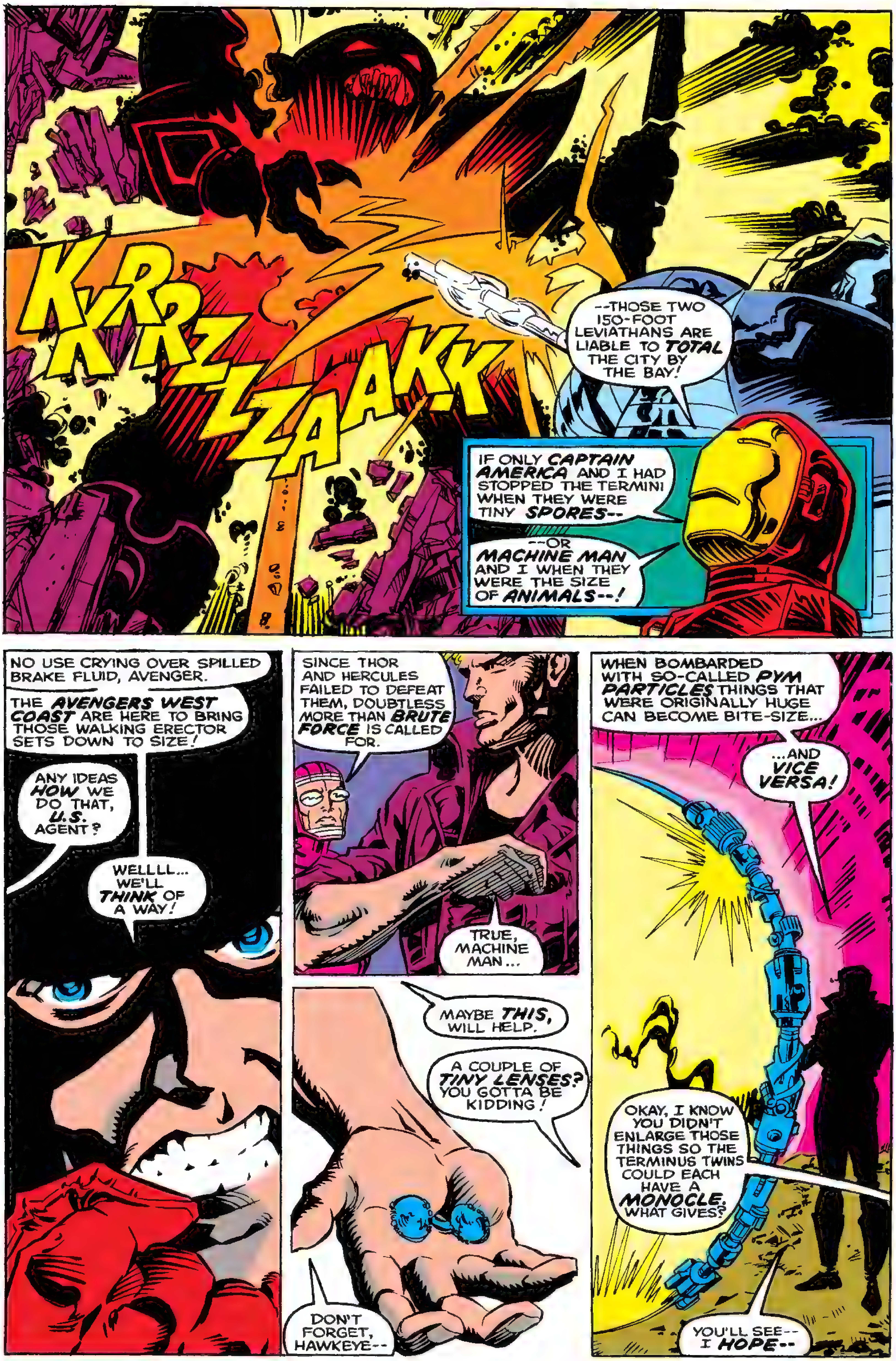
ROY & DANN THOMAS WRITERS / JIM FRY PENCILER / KEITH WILLIAMS INKER / DIANA ALBERS LETTERER / RENEÉ WITTESTAETTER COLORIST / HOWARD MACKIE EDITOR / TOM DeFALCO ED. IN CHIEF

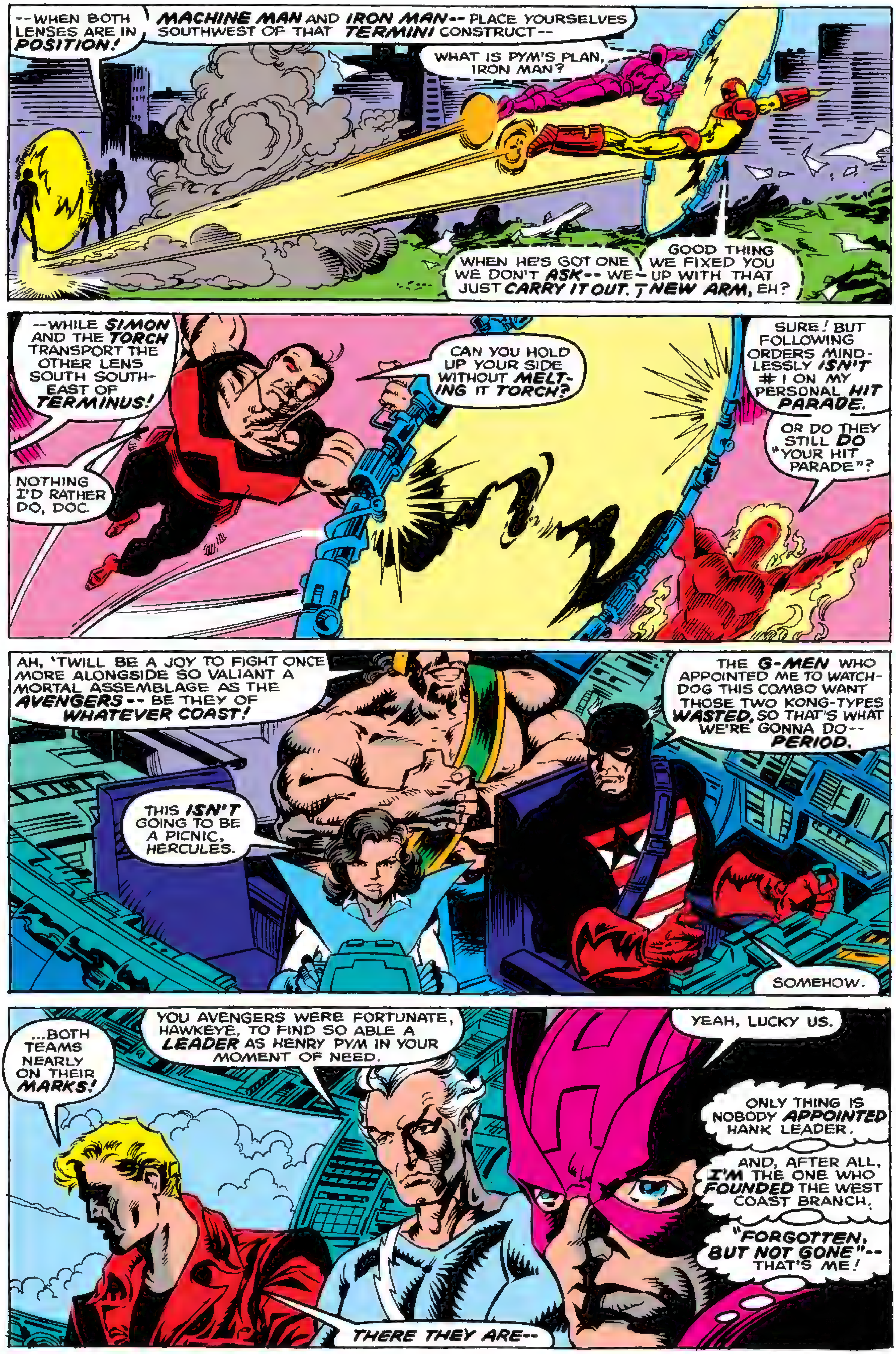
WHEN TITANS TRASH!


BY THE MEDUSA'S SERPENTINE LOCKS!

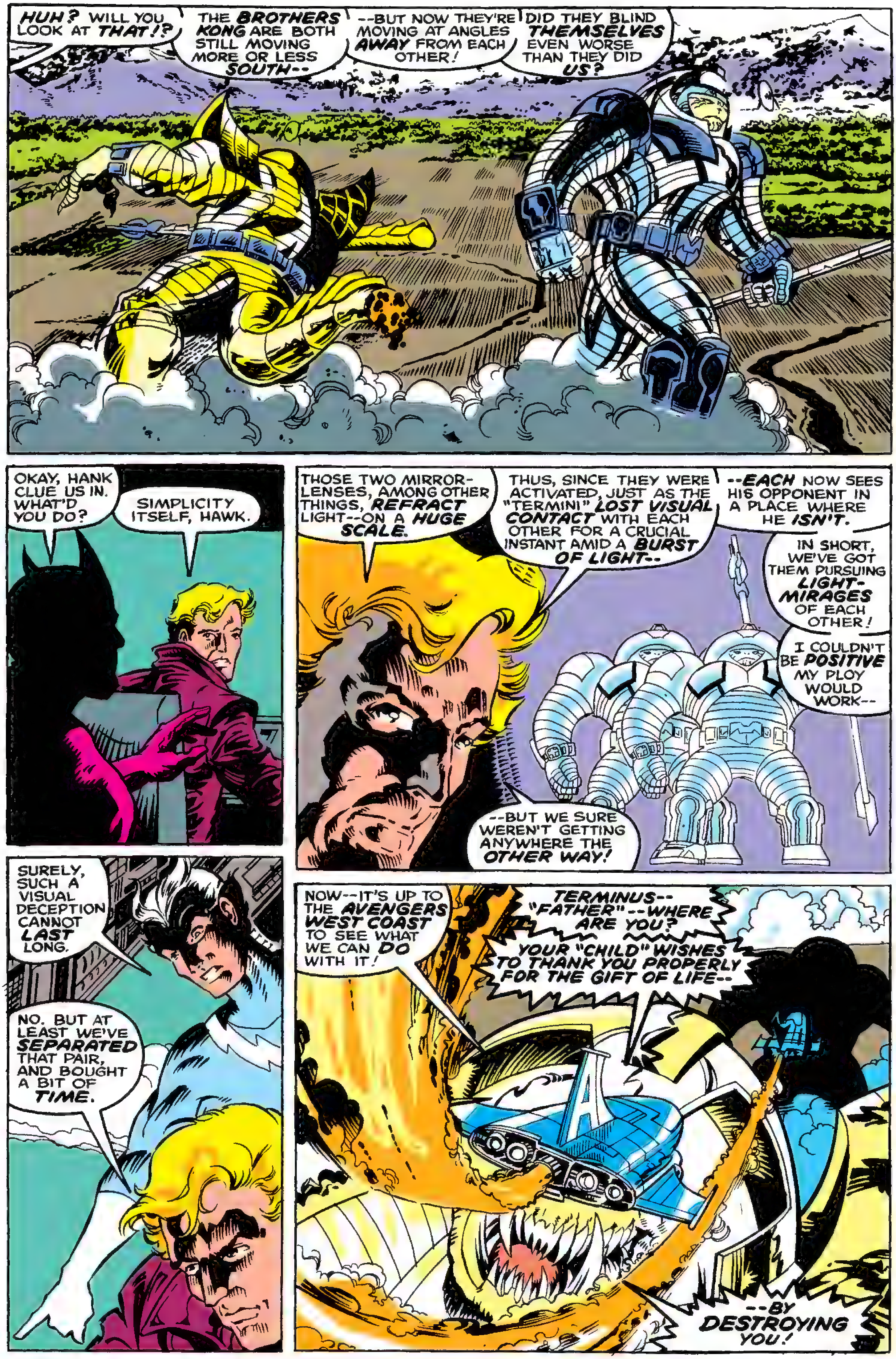

SCARCE HAD THE MULTITUDE OF TERMINI COMBINED INTO A SINGLE TOWERING BEHEMOTH--
--THAN A METALLIC TWIN TO THE FALSE TERMINUS I ONCE FOUGHT HATH DESCENDED FROM OUT OF THE HEAVENS--*
--AND NOW THE TWAIN DO BATTLE IN THE HEART OF SAN FRANCISCO!
HOLD! TERMINUS SPEAKS-- IF TERMINUS HE TRULY BE--TO TERMINI!
*1990 THOR ANNUAL, NOW ON SALE --H. M.
SO, WORMLING--YOU ARE THE SPAWN OF TERMINUS --THE MANY WHO ARE BECOME THE ONE.
I HAVE RETURNED FROM FAR SPACE, HAVING SLAIN A THUNDER GOD AND INCORPORATED HIS HAMMER INTO MY OWN BODY!
--TO LEARN WHICH OF US SHALL INHERIT THE VENGEFUL MANTLE OF OUR LONG-DEAD CREATOR RACE!
THEN YOU SHOULD HAVE STAYED HIDDEN BEHIND SOME DARKING STAR, TERMINUS-- "FATHER"!
FOR YOU HAVE JOURNEYED ALL THIS VAST DISTANCE--
--ONLY TO FACE OBLITERATION, AT THE HAND OF YOUR "SON".
HAVE I?
SPLANNNG
WE SHALL SEE!
BY MY BEARD--
THE TERMINI-CREATURE HATH BROKEN OFF ITS OWN SPINELIKE TAIL--
--TO DEFRAY THE BLOW OF HIS ELDER'S LANCE!
DID THEIR CREATORS DESIGN IT THUS--THAT IT MIGHT BE USED AS A WEAPON?


AND HOW IS IT THAT THE TERMINI, WHO LATELY DID BABBLE LIKE INFANTS, HAVE NOW FUSED INTO AN ENTITY WHICH TRADES BANTER, AS WELL AS BLOWS WITH TERMINUS?
AH! THE AVENGERS HAVE COME!
SHROOOSH
MAYHAP THEY CAN TAKE ME TO SOME VANTAGE POINT WHENCE I CAN ENTER THE FRAY.
WASP! DR. PYM! A THOUSAND THANKS FOR ANSWERING MY CLARION CALL!
FRANKLY HERCULES, IT SURPRISED US.
WE FIGURED ANY MENACE YOU AND THOR COULDN'T WHIP BY YOURSELVES HAD TO BE A WHOPPER.
WE WERE WRONG.
IT'S TWO WHOPPERS!
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
D23
AND WHERE IS THOR, ANYWAY?
THOUGHT YOU TWO CAME HERE TOGETHER.
ALAS, IRON MAN, 'TIS CLEAR THE SON OF ODIN HATH MADE A MISCALCULATION MOST TRAGIC.
LEAVING ME TO FIGHT THE VARIOUS TERMINI, THOR SOARED INTO SPACE IN SEARCH OF THE TRUE TERMINUS--
--ONLY TERMINUS DID RETURN, BOASTING HE HAD SLAIN THOR, AND "INCORPORATED" MJOLNIR INTO HIS VERY BEING:
THOR--DEAD?
BUT THE ENCHANTMENTS PLACED ON THE URU HAMMER SHOULD'VE PREVENTED THE ALIEN FROM EVEN LIFTING IT--LET ALONE ABSORBING IT!
TERMINUS, MY FRIEND, IS NO ORDINARY FOEMAN.
WHAT'S MORE WHILE WE STAND HERE JAWING--

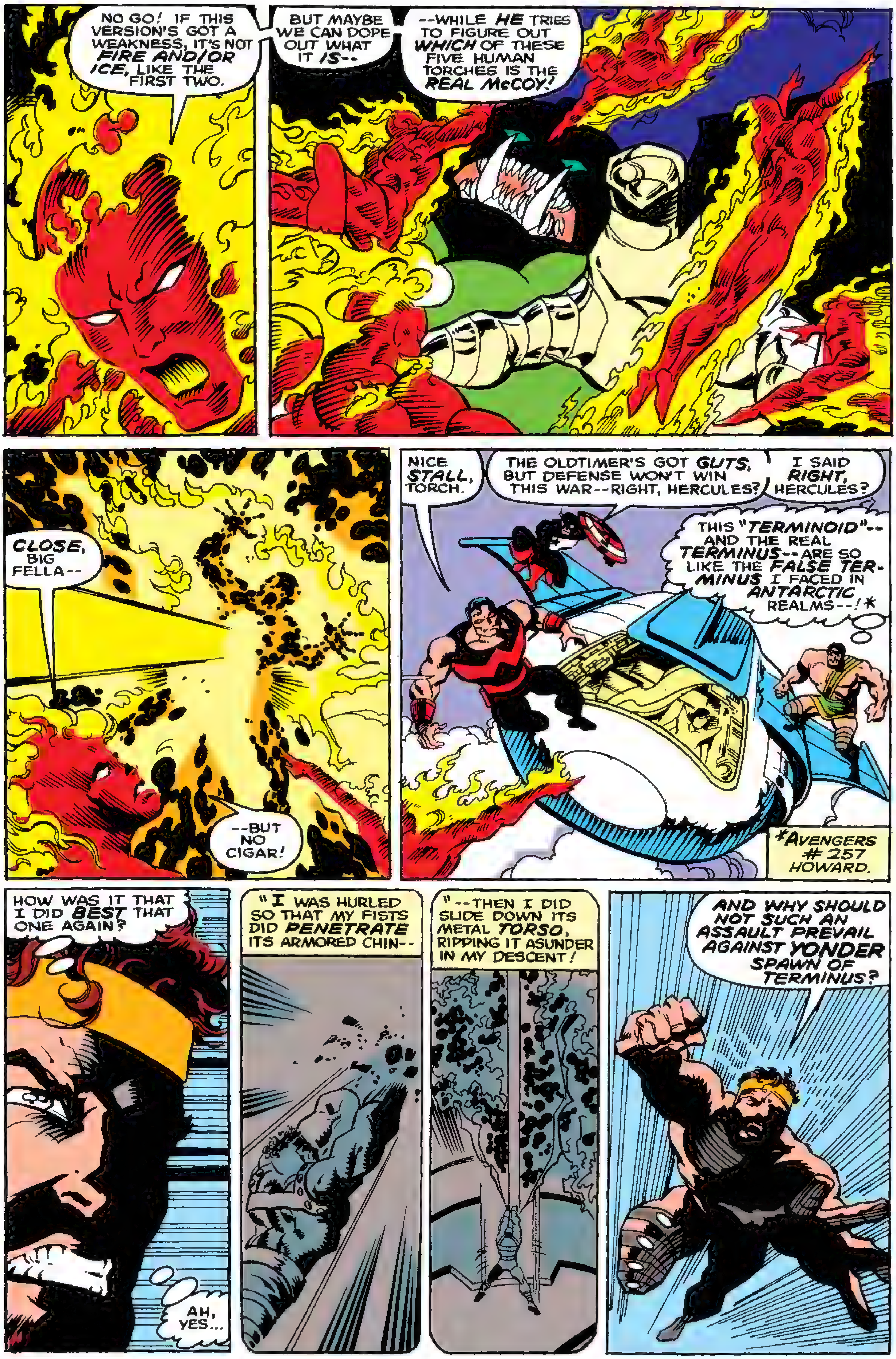

KKRRZZAAKK
--THOSE TWO 150-FOOT LEVIATHANS ARE LIABLE TO *TOTAL* THE CITY BY THE BAY!
IF ONLY *CAPTAIN AMERICA* AND I HAD STOPPED THE TERMINI WHEN THEY WERE TINY *SPORES--*
--OR *MACHINE MAN* AND I WHEN THEY WERE THE SIZE OF *ANIMALS--!*
NO USE CRYING OVER SPILLED BRAKE FLUID, AVENGER.
THE *AVENGERS WEST COAST* ARE HERE TO BRING THOSE WALKING ERECTOR SETS DOWN TO SIZE!
ANY IDEAS *HOW* WE DO THAT, *U.S.* AGENT?
WELLLL... WE'LL *THINK* OF A WAY!
SINCE THOR AND HERCULES FAILED TO DEFEAT THEM, DOUBTLESS MORE THAN *BRUTE FORCE* IS CALLED FOR.
TRUE, MACHINE MAN...
MAYBE *THIS*, WILL HELP.
A COUPLE OF *TINY LENSES?* YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING!
DON'T FORGET, HAWKEYE--
WHEN BOMBARDED WITH SO-CALLED *PYM PARTICLES* THINGS THAT WERE ORIGINALLY HUGE CAN BECOME BITE-SIZE...
...AND *VICE VERSA!*
OKAY, I KNOW YOU DIDN'T ENLARGE THOSE THINGS SO THE TERMINUS TWINS COULD EACH HAVE A *MONOCLE*. WHAT GIVES?
YOU'LL SEE-- I *HOPE--*

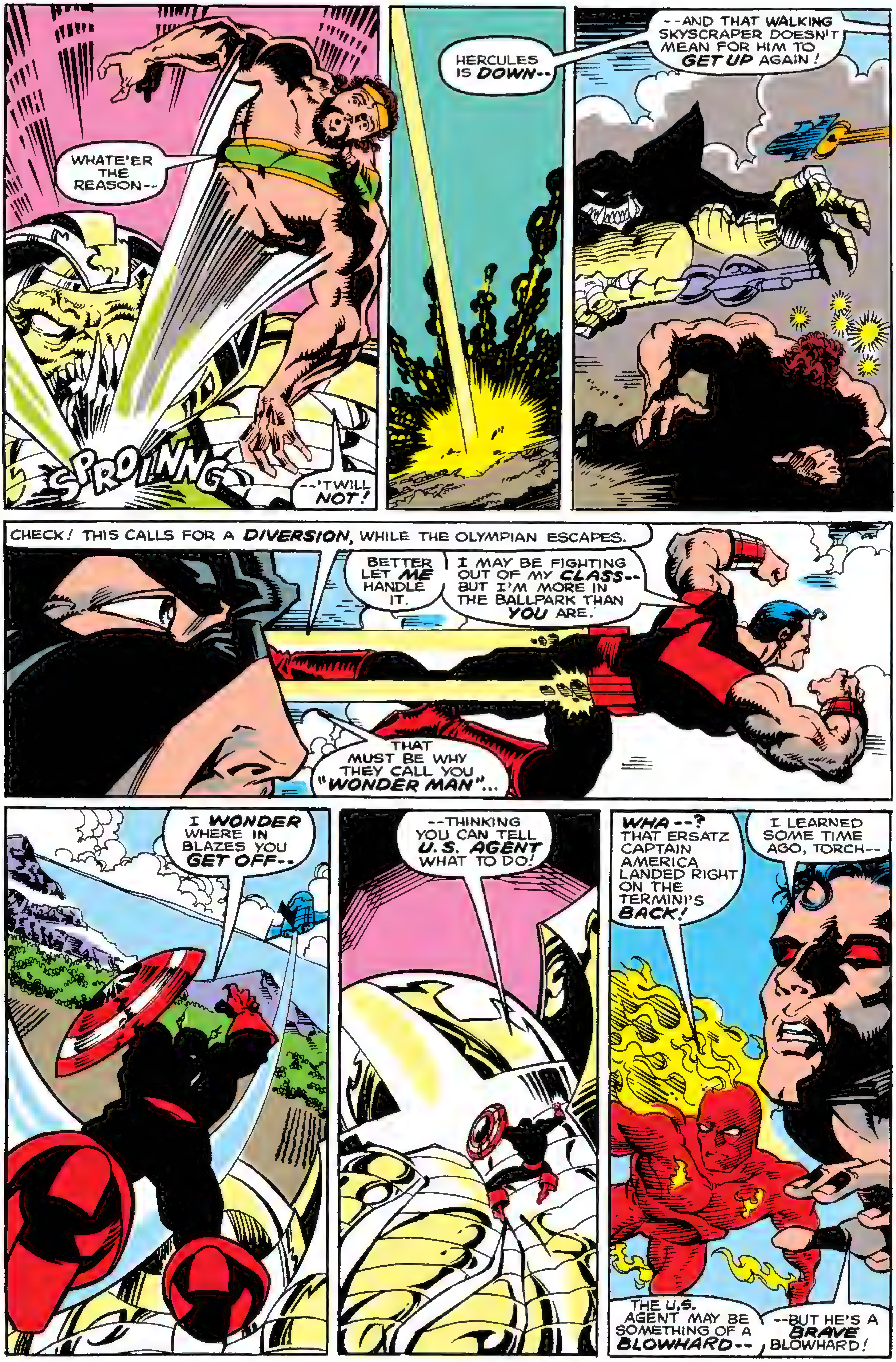

--WHEN BOTH LENSES ARE IN POSITION!
MACHINE MAN AND IRON MAN-- PLACE YOURSELVES SOUTHWEST OF THAT TERMINI CONSTRUCT--
WHAT IS PYM'S PLAN, IRON MAN?
WHEN HE'S GOT ONE WE DON'T ASK-- WE-- JUST CARRY IT OUT.
GOOD THING WE FIXED YOU UP WITH THAT NEW ARM, EH?
--WHILE SIMON AND THE TORCH TRANSPORT THE OTHER LENS SOUTH SOUTHEAST OF TERMINUS!
NOTHING I'D RATHER DO, DOC.
CAN YOU HOLD UP YOUR SIDE WITHOUT MELTING IT TORCH?
SURE! BUT FOLLOWING ORDERS MINDLESSLY ISN'T # 1 ON MY PERSONAL HIT PARADE.
OR DO THEY STILL DO "YOUR HIT PARADE"?
AH, 'TWILL BE A JOY TO FIGHT ONCE MORE ALONGSIDE SO VALIANT A MORTAL ASSEMBLAGE AS THE AVENGERS -- BE THEY OF WHATEVER COAST!
THIS ISN'T GOING TO BE A PICNIC, HERCULES.
THE G-MEN WHO APPOINTED ME TO WATCHDOG THIS COMBO WANT THOSE TWO KONG-TYPES WASTED, SO THAT'S WHAT WE'RE GONNA DO-- PERIOD.
SOMEHOW.
...BOTH TEAMS NEARLY ON THEIR MARKS!
YOU AVENGERS WERE FORTUNATE, HAWKEYE, TO FIND SO ABLE A LEADER AS HENRY PYM IN YOUR MOMENT OF NEED.
YEAH, LUCKY US.
ONLY THING IS NOBODY APPOINTED HANK LEADER.
AND, AFTER ALL, I'M THE ONE WHO FOUNDED THE WEST COAST BRANCH.
"FORGOTTEN, BUT NOT GONE"-- THAT'S ME!
THERE THEY ARE--

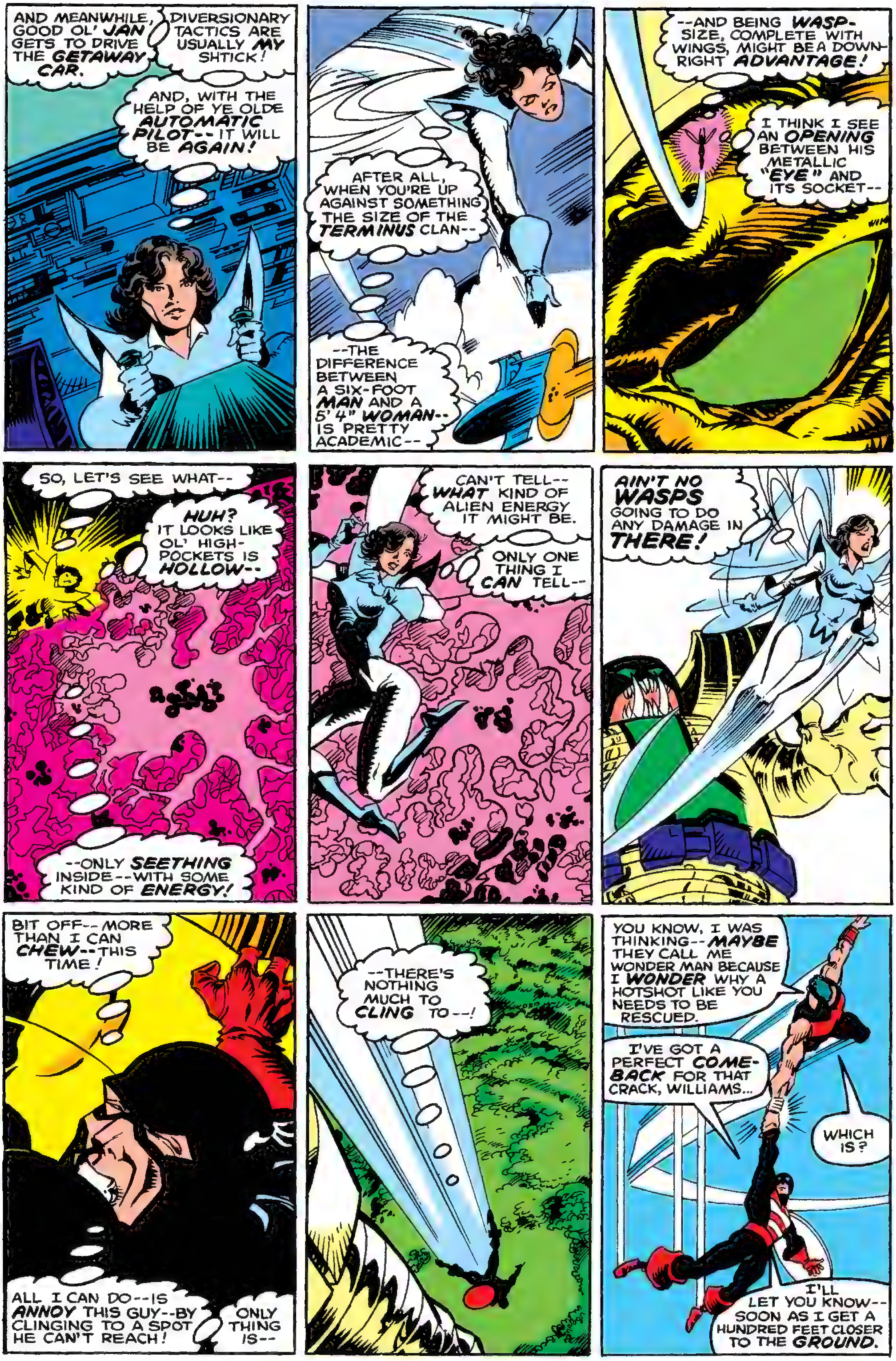
--BIGGER THAN *LIFE*, AND AN INFINITE NUMBER OF TIMES AS *UGLY!*
HAVE YOU *NOTICED*, IRON MAN--?
EVEN AS THE TWO TERMINI *BLAST* AT EACH OTHER, EACH SEEKING A VITAL SPOT--THEY HAVE SLOWLY EDGED *SOUTHWARD* FROM SAN FRANCISCO.
SINCE WE *HOPED* THEY'D MOVE AWAY FROM THE AREAS OF GREATEST POPULATION DENSITY, MAYBE WE SHOULDN'T LOOK A GIFT HORSE IN THE MOUTH, X-15.
BUT *YEAH*, NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT--
--IT ALMOST SEEMS THEY'VE EACH MOVED SOUTH ACCORDING TO SOME *PRE-CONCEIVED, UNSPOKEN PACT*, EVEN WHILE TRYING TO TO KILL EACH OTHER!
WONDER MAN! DR. PYM IS SIGNALING US!
HE WANTS US *IN POSITION* THE NEXT TIME THEY--
BY ZEUS' BEARD AND MINE OWN!
WHAT HAPPENED? EVEN MY DARK GLASSES DIDN'T KEEP ME FROM BEING BLINDED.
WAIT'LL MY *PUPILS* GO BACK TO BEING BIGGER THAN *B-B's*, AND I'LL--

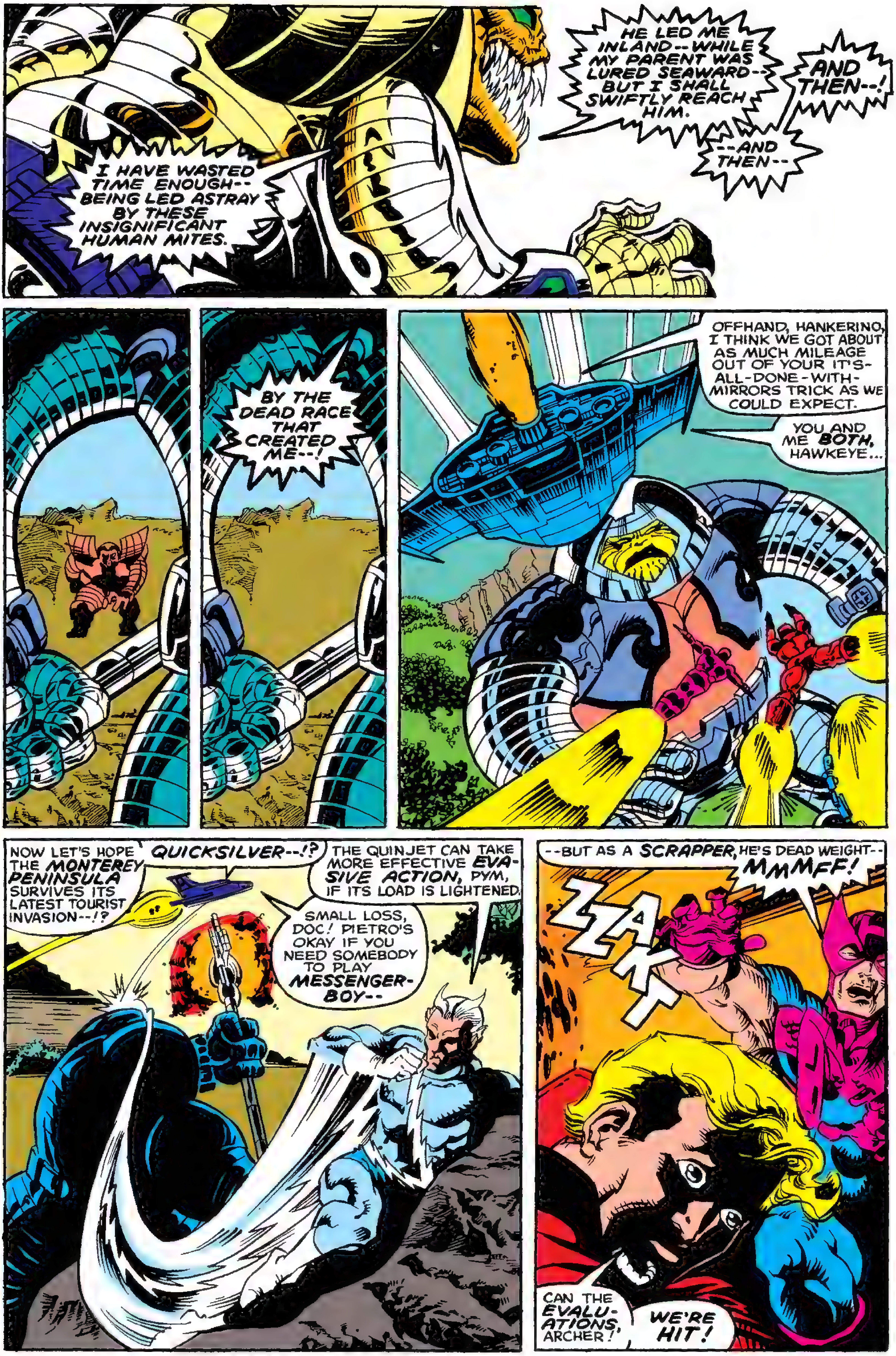

HUH? WILL YOU LOOK AT THAT!?
THE BROTHERS KONG ARE BOTH STILL MOVING MORE OR LESS SOUTH--
--BUT NOW THEY'RE MOVING AT ANGLES AWAY FROM EACH OTHER!
DID THEY BLIND THEMSELVES EVEN WORSE THAN THEY DID US?
OKAY, HANK CLUE US IN. WHAT'D YOU DO?
SIMPLICITY ITSELF, HAWK.
THOSE TWO MIRROR-LENSES, AMONG OTHER THINGS, REFRACT LIGHT--ON A HUGE SCALE.
THUS, SINCE THEY WERE ACTIVATED, JUST AS THE "TERMINI" LOST VISUAL CONTACT WITH EACH OTHER FOR A CRUCIAL INSTANT AMID A BURST OF LIGHT--
--EACH NOW SEES HIS OPPONENT IN A PLACE WHERE HE ISN'T.
IN SHORT, WE'VE GOT THEM PURSUING LIGHT-MIRAGES OF EACH OTHER!
I COULDN'T BE POSITIVE MY PLOY WOULD WORK--
--BUT WE SURE WEREN'T GETTING ANYWHERE THE OTHER WAY!
SURELY, SUCH A VISUAL DECEPTION CANNOT LAST LONG.
NO. BUT AT LEAST WE'VE SEPARATED THAT PAIR, AND BOUGHT A BIT OF TIME.
NOW--IT'S UP TO THE AVENGERS WEST COAST TO SEE WHAT WE CAN DO WITH IT!
TERMINUS-- "FATHER" --WHERE ARE YOU? YOUR "CHILD" WISHES TO THANK YOU PROPERLY FOR THE GIFT OF LIFE--
A
--BY DESTROYING YOU!

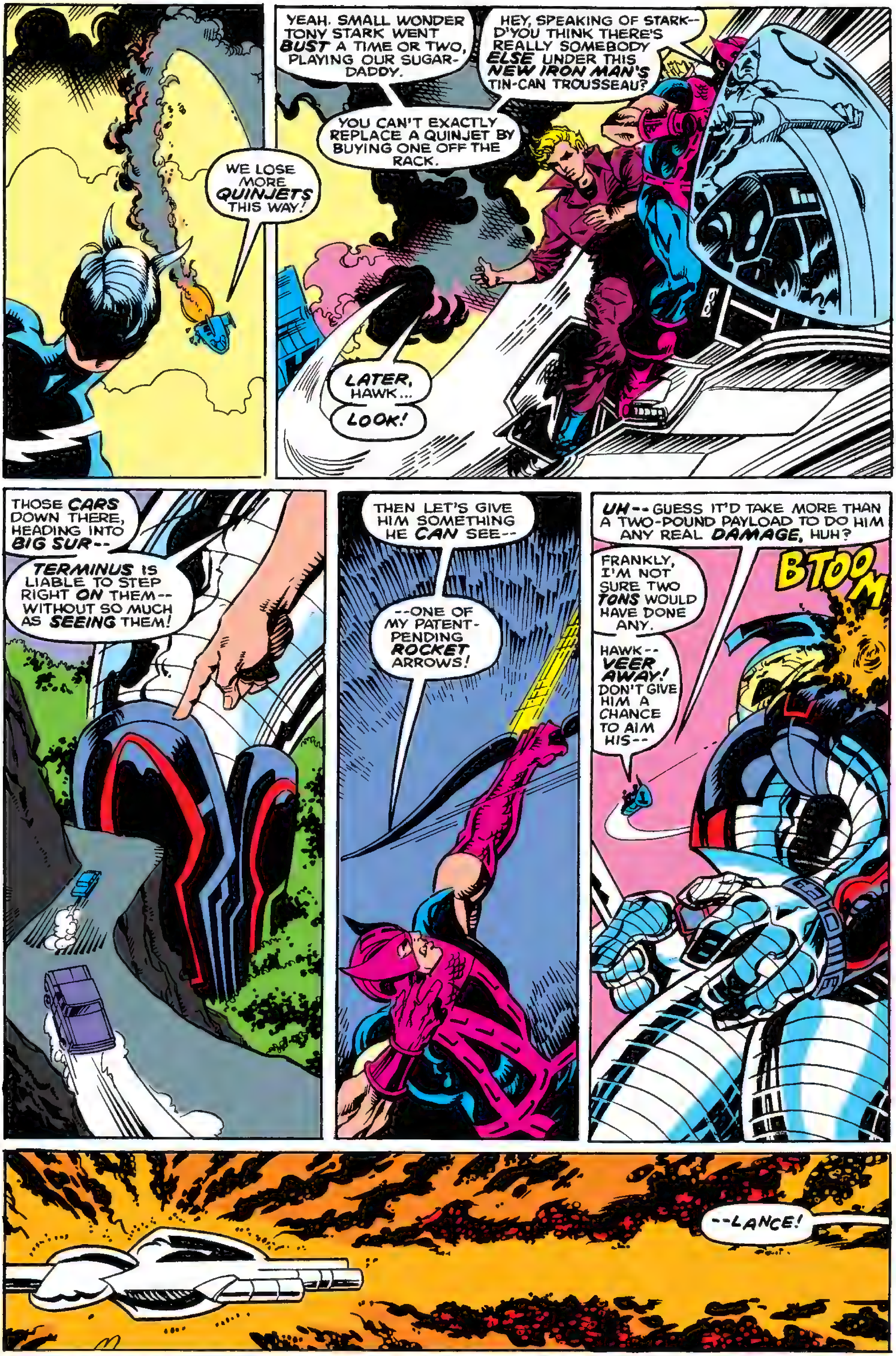
AH-- THERE YOU ARE!
NOW SHALL THE OLD GENERATION OF KILLING MACHINES GIVE WAY TO THE--
--NEW--!?
IMPERTINENT SPECKS! YOU HAVE SOUGHT TO DECEIVE A STAGE-FOUR TERMINOID WITH PHOTONIC IMAGES!
UH-OH! HE MUST'VE FIGURED IT OUT--AND SWITCHED ON SOME SIXTH SENSE!
FOR THAT, YOUR LIVES MUST BE EXTINGUISHED!
GOOD THING THAT LANCE-BLAST HOMED IN ON THE LENS-- INSTEAD OF US!
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, TORCH--
WHAMMF!
--BUT I GOT TIRED REAL FAST OF BEING TARGET PRACTICE FOR THIS CREEP!
YOU DISLODGED A METAL MOLAR-- BUT HE'S GOT PLENTY OF THEM TO SPARE!
MAYBE SOME HEAT, LIKE IRON MAN SAID WORKED AGAINST THE SECOND-STAGE TERMINI UP IN SEATTLE--!

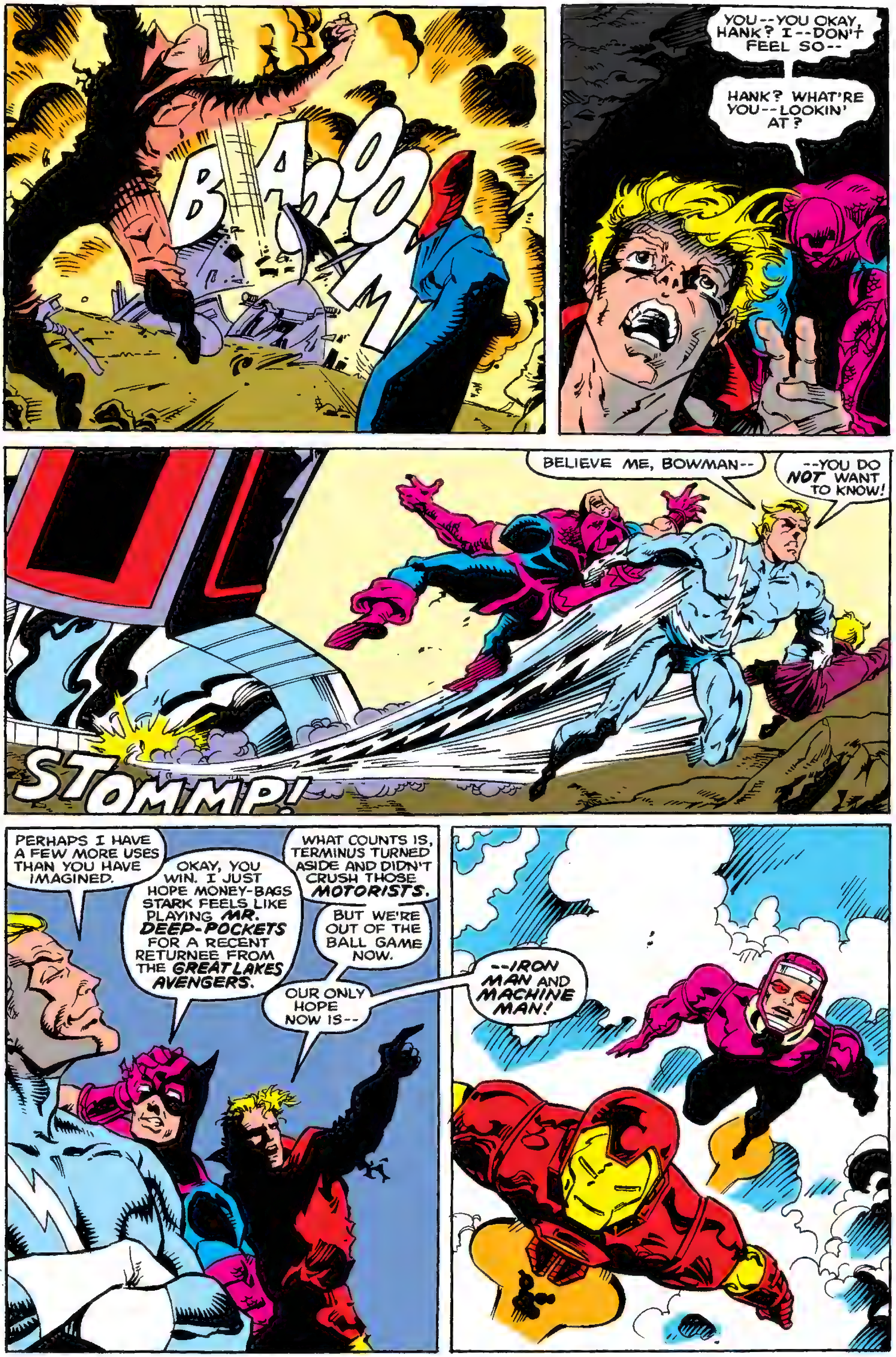

NO GO! IF THIS VERSION'S GOT A WEAKNESS, IT'S NOT ***FIRE AND/OR ICE,*** LIKE THE FIRST TWO.
BUT MAYBE WE CAN DOPE OUT WHAT IT ***IS***--
--WHILE ***HE*** TRIES TO FIGURE OUT ***WHICH*** OF THESE FIVE HUMAN TORCHES IS THE ***REAL McCOY!***
CLOSE, BIG FELLA--
--BUT NO CIGAR!
NICE ***STALL,*** TORCH.
THE OLDTIMER'S GOT ***GUTS,*** BUT DEFENSE WON'T WIN THIS WAR--RIGHT, HERCULES?
I SAID ***RIGHT,*** HERCULES?
THIS "***TERMINOID***"--AND THE REAL ***TERMINUS***--ARE SO LIKE THE ***FALSE TERMINUS*** I FACED IN ***ANTARCTIC*** REALMS--!*
*AVENGERS #257 HOWARD.
HOW WAS IT THAT I DID ***BEST*** THAT ONE AGAIN?
AH, YES...
"***I*** WAS HURLED SO THAT MY FISTS DID ***PENETRATE*** ITS ARMORED CHIN--
"--THEN I DID SLIDE DOWN ITS METAL ***TORSO,*** RIPPING IT ASUNDER IN MY DESCENT!
AND WHY SHOULD NOT SUCH AN ASSAULT PREVAIL AGAINST YONDER SPAWN OF TERMINUS?

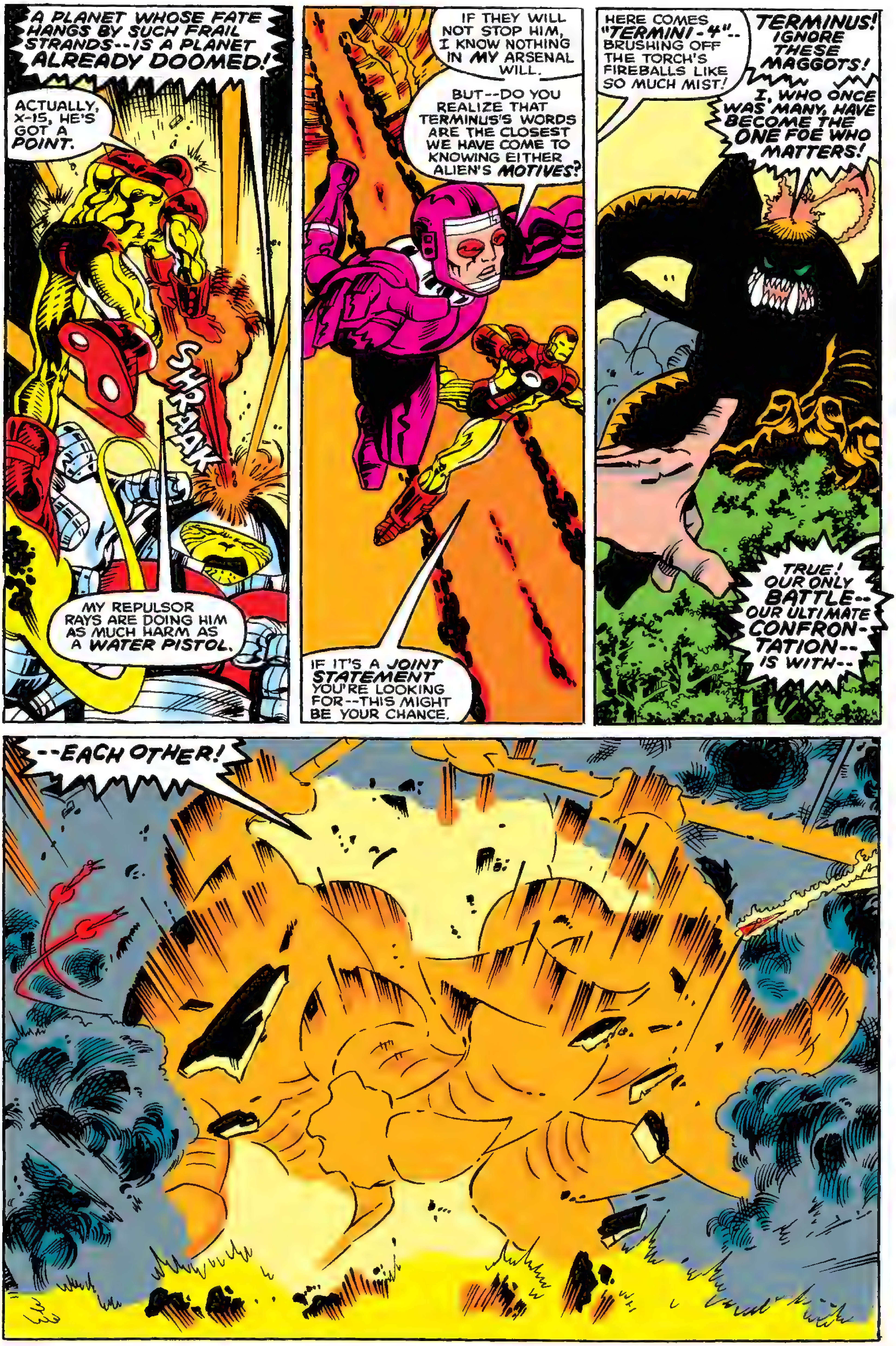

WHATE'ER THE REASON--
SPROINNG
--'TWILL NOT!
HERCULES IS DOWN--
--AND THAT WALKING SKYSCRAPER DOESN'T MEAN FOR HIM TO GET UP AGAIN!
CHECK! THIS CALLS FOR A DIVERSION, WHILE THE OLYMPIAN ESCAPES.
BETTER LET ME HANDLE IT.
I MAY BE FIGHTING OUT OF MY CLASS-- BUT I'M MORE IN THE BALLPARK THAN YOU ARE.
THAT MUST BE WHY THEY CALL YOU "WONDER MAN"...
I WONDER WHERE IN BLAZES YOU GET OFF--
--THINKING YOU CAN TELL U.S. AGENT WHAT TO DO!
WHA--? THAT ERSATZ CAPTAIN AMERICA LANDED RIGHT ON THE TERMINI'S BACK!
I LEARNED SOME TIME AGO, TORCH--
THE U.S. AGENT MAY BE SOMETHING OF A BLOWHARD--
--BUT HE'S A BRAVE BLOWHARD!

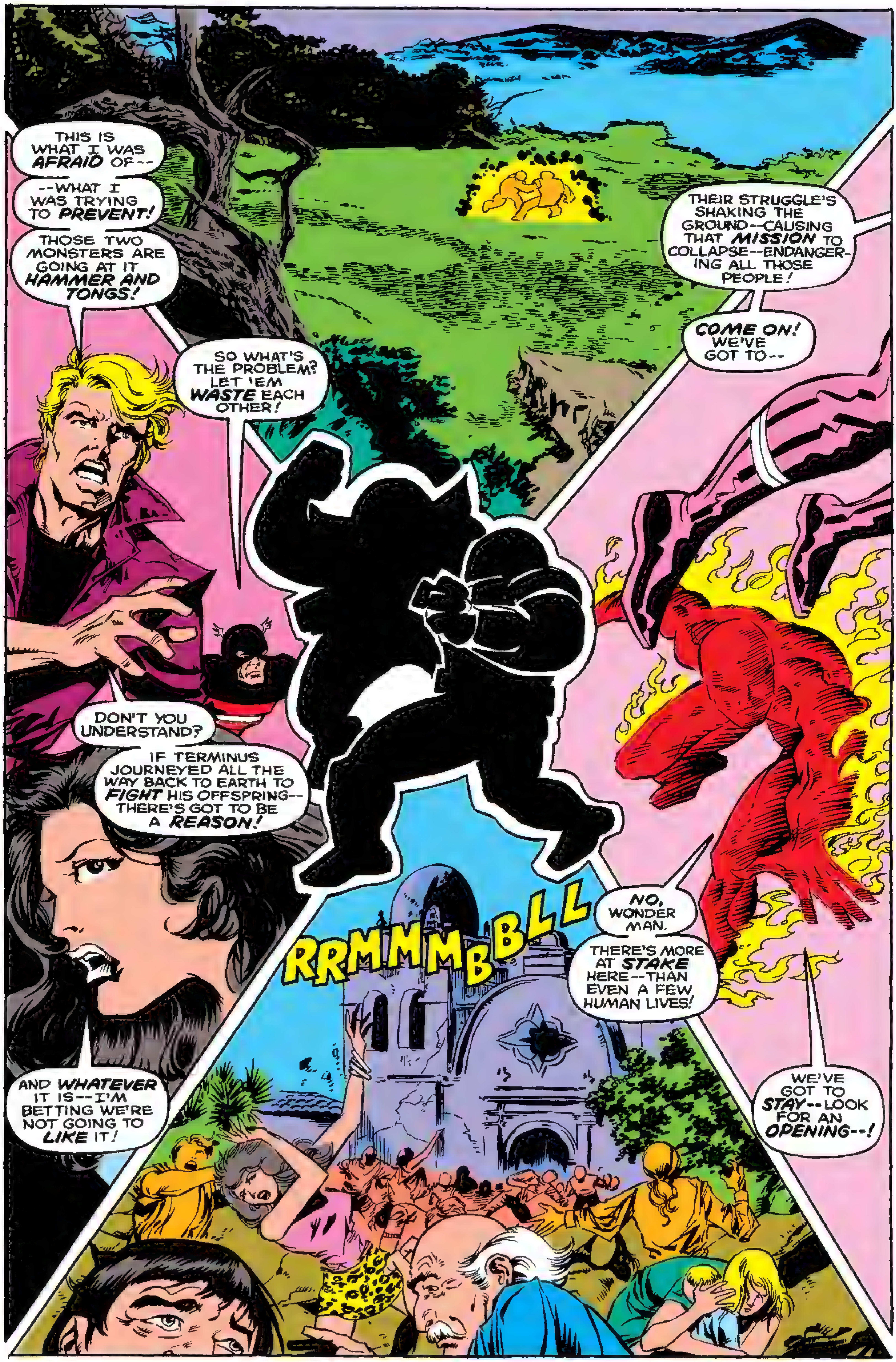

AND MEANWHILE, GOOD OL' JAN GETS TO DRIVE THE GETAWAY CAR.
DIVERSIONARY TACTICS ARE USUALLY MY SHTICK!
AND, WITH THE HELP OF YE OLDE AUTOMATIC PILOT-- IT WILL BE AGAIN!
AFTER ALL, WHEN YOU'RE UP AGAINST SOMETHING THE SIZE OF THE TERMINUS CLAN--
--THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A SIX-FOOT MAN AND A 5'4" WOMAN-- IS PRETTY ACADEMIC--
--AND BEING WASP-SIZE, COMPLETE WITH WINGS, MIGHT BE A DOWNRIGHT ADVANTAGE!
I THINK I SEE AN OPENING BETWEEN HIS METALLIC "EYE" AND ITS SOCKET--
SO, LET'S SEE WHAT--
HUH? IT LOOKS LIKE OL' HIGH-POCKETS IS HOLLOW--
--ONLY SEETHING INSIDE--WITH SOME KIND OF ENERGY!
CAN'T TELL-- WHAT KIND OF ALIEN ENERGY IT MIGHT BE.
ONLY ONE THING I CAN TELL--
AIN'T NO WASPS GOING TO DO ANY DAMAGE IN THERE!
BIT OFF--MORE THAN I CAN CHEW--THIS TIME!
ALL I CAN DO--IS ANNOY THIS GUY--BY CLINGING TO A SPOT HE CAN'T REACH!
ONLY THING IS--
--THERE'S NOTHING MUCH TO CLING TO--!
YOU KNOW, I WAS THINKING--MAYBE THEY CALL ME WONDER MAN BECAUSE I WONDER WHY A HOTSHOT LIKE YOU NEEDS TO BE RESCUED.
I'VE GOT A PERFECT COMEBACK FOR THAT CRACK, WILLIAMS...
WHICH IS?
I'LL LET YOU KNOW-- SOON AS I GET A HUNDRED FEET CLOSER TO THE GROUND.

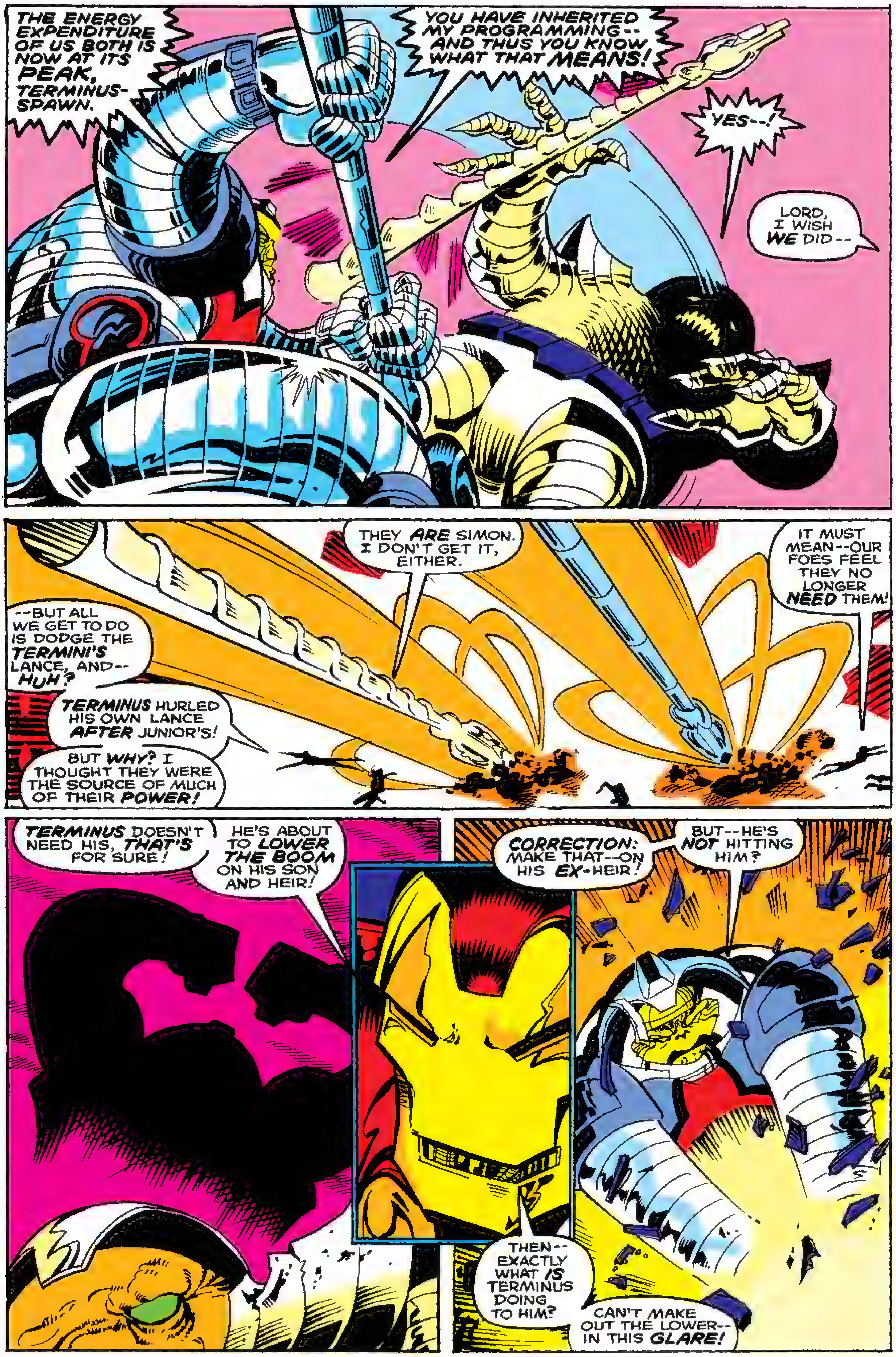

I HAVE WASTED TIME ENOUGH-- BEING LED ASTRAY BY THESE INSIGNIFICANT HUMAN MITES.
HE LED ME INLAND--WHILE MY PARENT WAS LURED SEAWARD-- BUT I SHALL SWIFTLY REACH HIM.
--AND THEN--
AND THEN--!
BY THE DEAD RACE THAT CREATED ME--!
OFFHAND, HANKERINO, I THINK WE GOT ABOUT AS MUCH MILEAGE OUT OF YOUR IT'S-ALL-DONE-WITH-MIRRORS TRICK AS WE COULD EXPECT.
YOU AND ME BOTH, HAWKEYE...
NOW LET'S HOPE THE MONTEREY PENINSULA SURVIVES ITS LATEST TOURIST INVASION--!?
QUICKSILVER--!?
THE QUINJET CAN TAKE MORE EFFECTIVE EVASIVE ACTION, PYM, IF ITS LOAD IS LIGHTENED.
SMALL LOSS, DOC! PIETRO'S OKAY IF YOU NEED SOMEBODY TO PLAY MESSENGER-BOY--
--BUT AS A SCRAPPER, HE'S DEAD WEIGHT--
MMMFF!
ZZAKT
CAN THE EVALUATIONS, ARCHER!
WE'RE HIT!

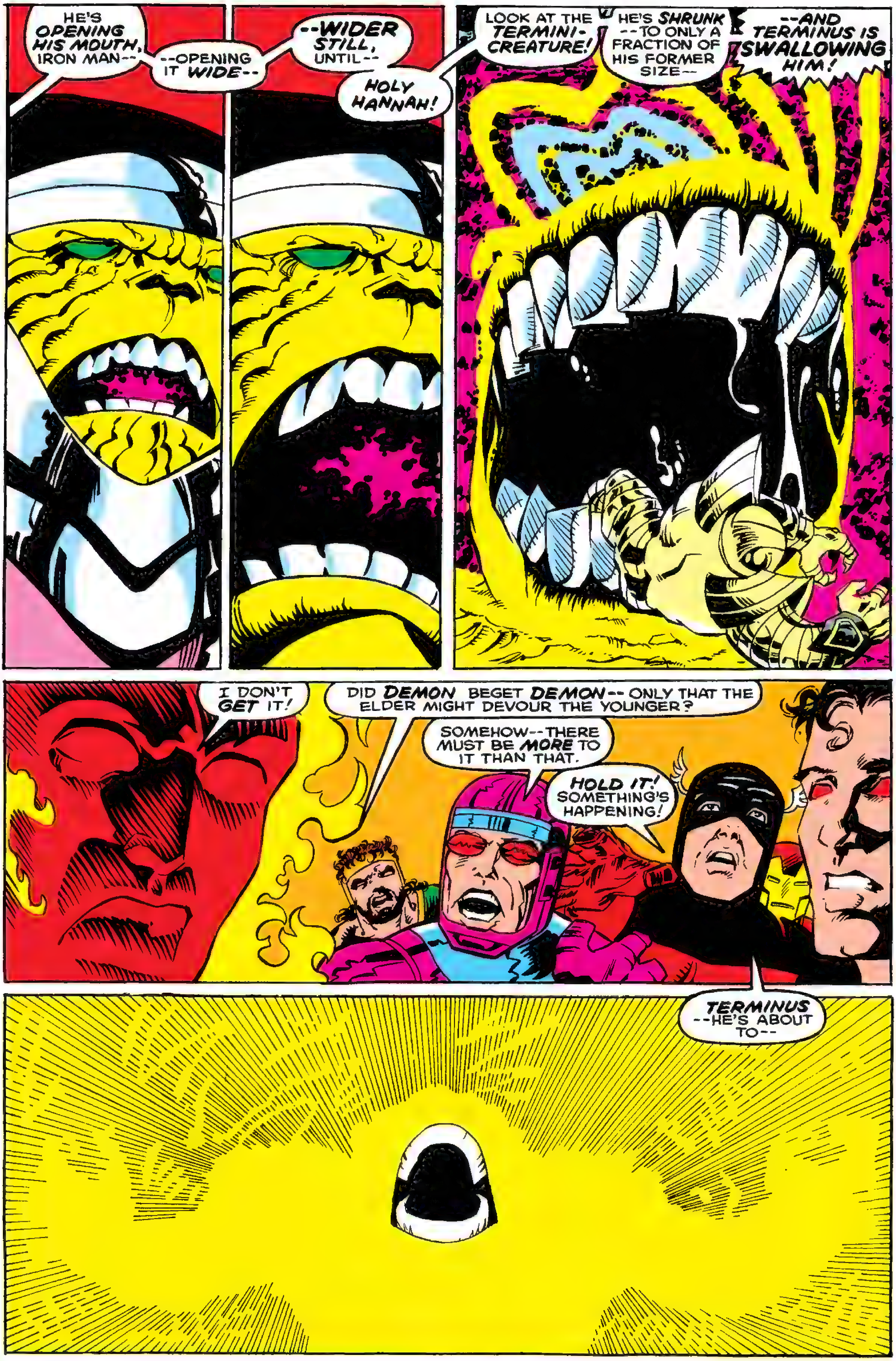

WE LOSE MORE QUINJETS THIS WAY!
YEAH. SMALL WONDER TONY STARK WENT BUST A TIME OR TWO, PLAYING OUR SUGAR-DADDY.
HEY, SPEAKING OF STARK-- D'YOU THINK THERE'S REALLY SOMEBODY ELSE UNDER THIS NEW IRON MAN'S TIN-CAN TROUSSEAU?
YOU CAN'T EXACTLY REPLACE A QUINJET BY BUYING ONE OFF THE RACK.
LATER, HAWK...
LOOK!
THOSE CARS DOWN THERE, HEADING INTO BIG SUR--
TERMINUS IS LIABLE TO STEP RIGHT ON THEM-- WITHOUT SO MUCH AS SEEING THEM!
THEN LET'S GIVE HIM SOMETHING HE CAN SEE--
--ONE OF MY PATENT-PENDING ROCKET ARROWS!
UH--GUESS IT'D TAKE MORE THAN A TWO-POUND PAYLOAD TO DO HIM ANY REAL DAMAGE, HUH?
BTOOM
FRANKLY, I'M NOT SURE TWO TONS WOULD HAVE DONE ANY.
HAWK-- VEER AWAY! DON'T GIVE HIM A CHANCE TO AIM HIS--
--LANCE!

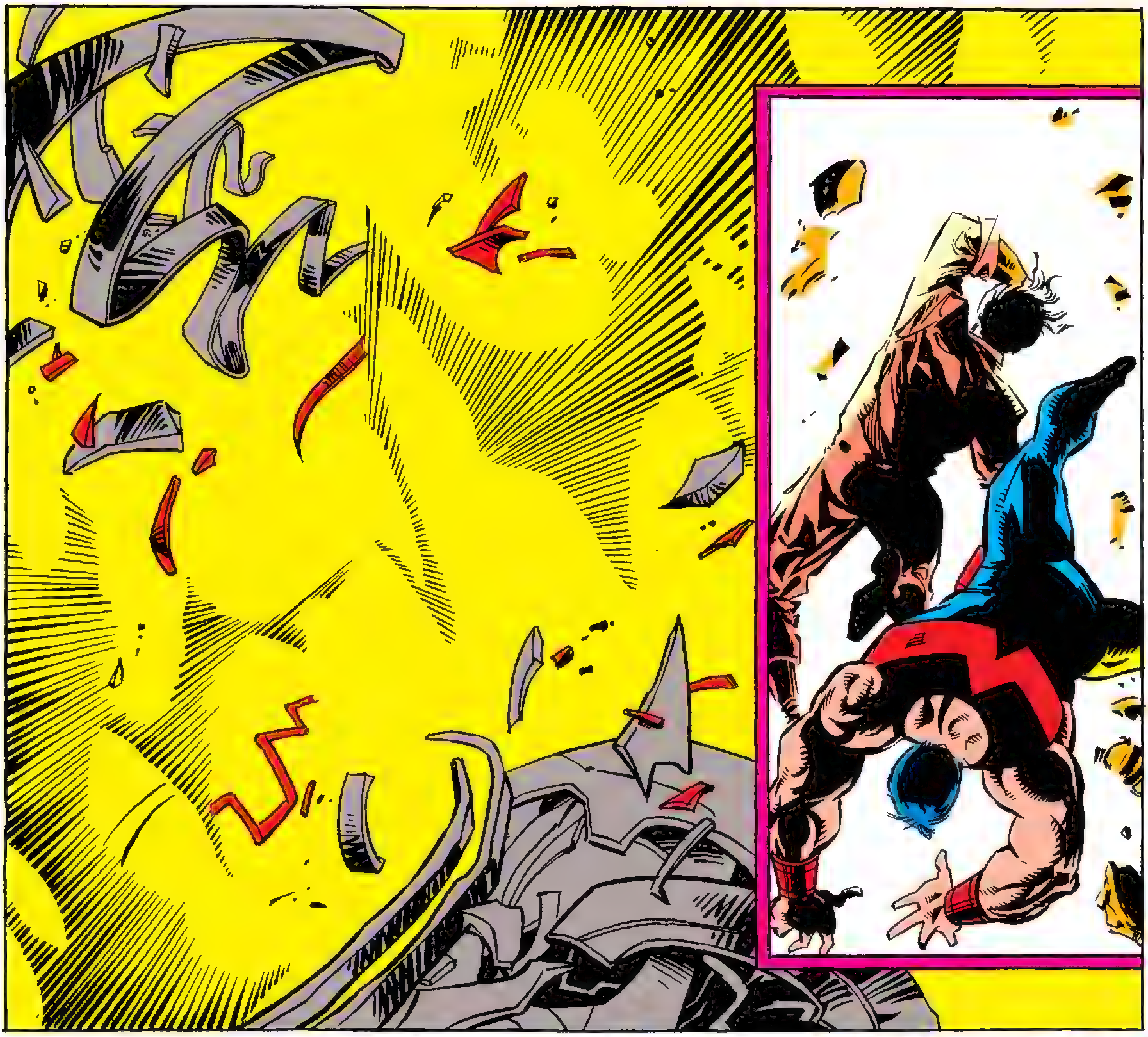

BAROOOM
YOU--YOU OKAY, HANK? I--DON'T FEEL SO--
HANK? WHAT'RE YOU--LOOKIN' AT?
BELIEVE ME, BOWMAN--
--YOU DO **NOT** WANT TO KNOW!
STOMMP!
PERHAPS I HAVE A FEW MORE USES THAN YOU HAVE IMAGINED.
OKAY, YOU WIN. I JUST HOPE MONEY-BAGS STARK FEELS LIKE PLAYING **MR. DEEP-POCKETS** FOR A RECENT RETURNEE FROM THE **GREAT LAKES AVENGERS.**
WHAT COUNTS IS, TERMINUS TURNED ASIDE AND DIDN'T CRUSH THOSE **MOTORISTS.**
BUT WE'RE OUT OF THE BALL GAME NOW.
OUR ONLY HOPE NOW IS--
--**IRON MAN** AND **MACHINE MAN!**

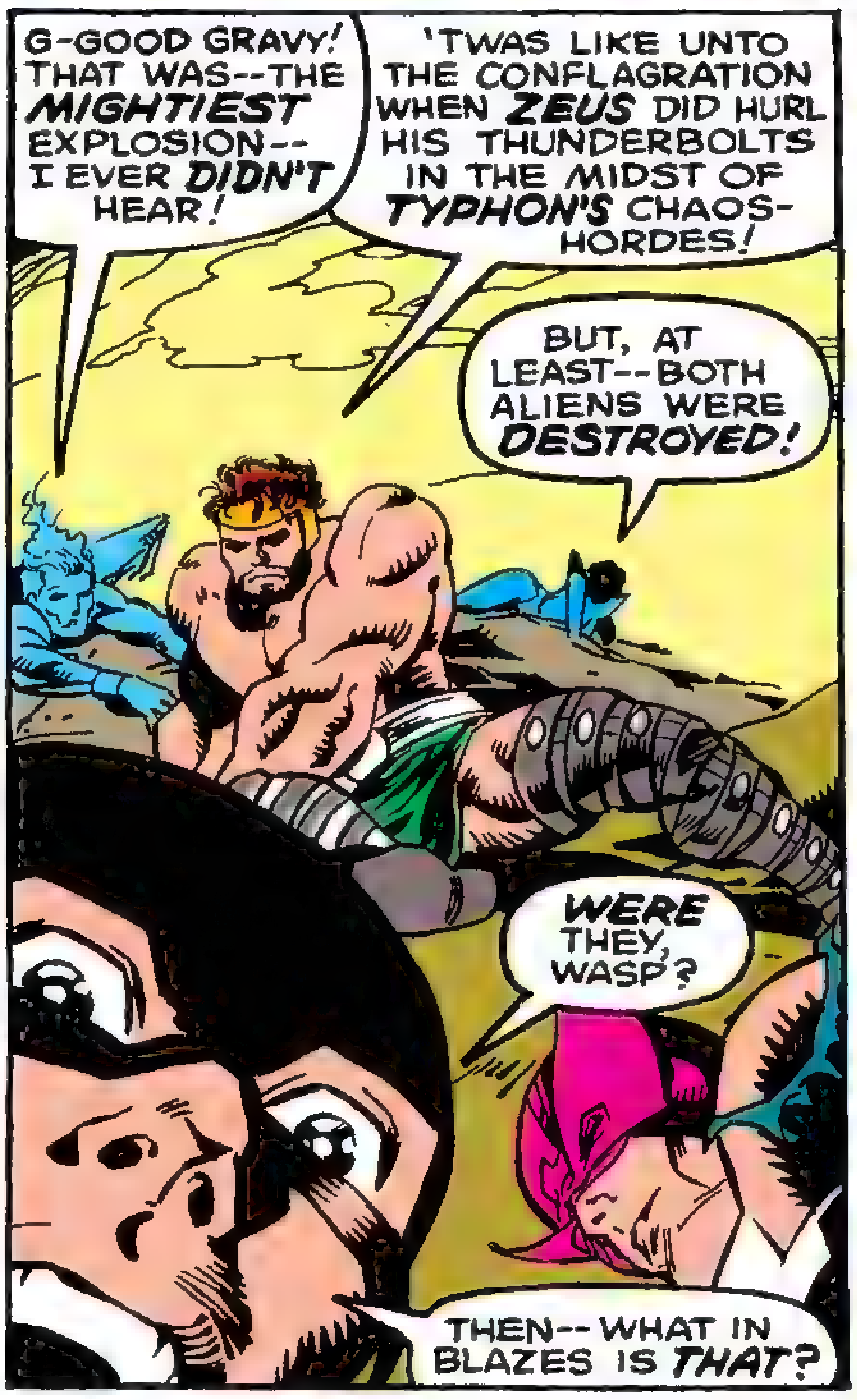

A PLANET WHOSE FATE HANGS BY SUCH FRAIL STRANDS--IS A PLANET ALREADY DOOMED!
ACTUALLY, X-15, HE'S GOT A POINT.
SHRAAAK
MY REPULSOR RAYS ARE DOING HIM AS MUCH HARM AS A WATER PISTOL.
IF THEY WILL NOT STOP HIM, I KNOW NOTHING IN MY ARSENAL WILL.
BUT--DO YOU REALIZE THAT TERMINUS'S WORDS ARE THE CLOSEST WE HAVE COME TO KNOWING EITHER ALIEN'S MOTIVES?
IF IT'S A JOINT STATEMENT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR--THIS MIGHT BE YOUR CHANCE.
HERE COMES "TERMINI-4"-- BRUSHING OFF THE TORCH'S FIREBALLS LIKE SO MUCH MIST!
TERMINUS! IGNORE THESE MAGGOTS!
I, WHO ONCE WAS MANY, HAVE BECOME THE ONE FOE WHO MATTERS!
TRUE! OUR ONLY BATTLE-- OUR ULTIMATE CONFRONTATION-- IS WITH--
--EACH OTHER!

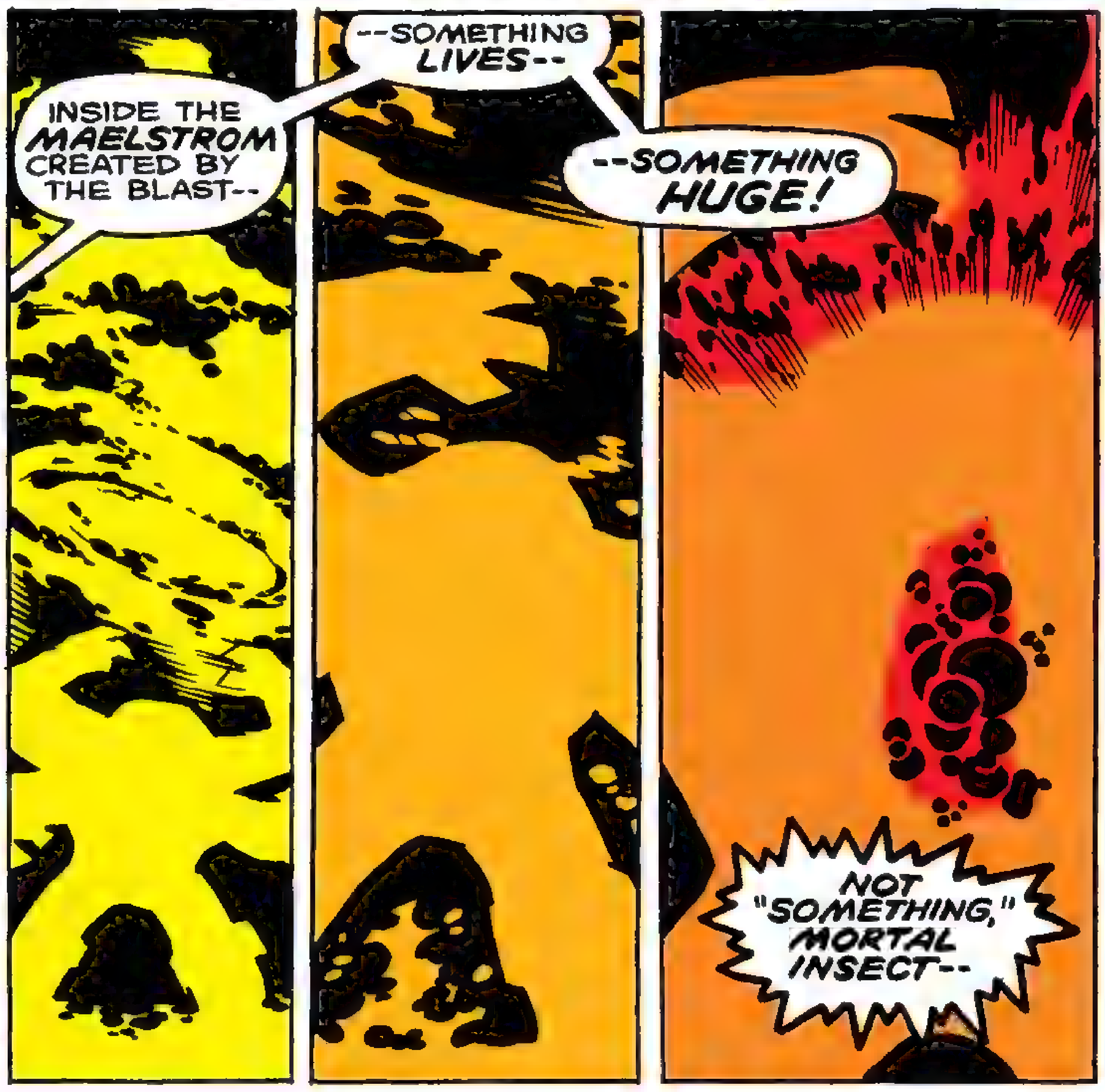

THIS IS WHAT I WAS *AFRAID* OF--
--WHAT I WAS TRYING TO *PREVENT!*
THOSE TWO MONSTERS ARE GOING AT IT *HAMMER AND TONGS!*
SO WHAT'S THE PROBLEM? LET 'EM *WASTE* EACH OTHER!
THEIR STRUGGLE'S SHAKING THE GROUND--CAUSING THAT *MISSION* TO COLLAPSE--ENDANGERING ALL THOSE PEOPLE!
COME ON! WE'VE GOT TO--
DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND?
IF TERMINUS JOURNEYED ALL THE WAY BACK TO EARTH TO *FIGHT* HIS OFFSPRING--THERE'S GOT TO BE A *REASON!*
RRMMMMBBLL
NO, WONDER MAN.
THERE'S MORE AT *STAKE* HERE--THAN EVEN A FEW HUMAN LIVES!
AND *WHATEVER* IT IS--I'M BETTING WE'RE NOT GOING TO *LIKE* IT!
WE'VE GOT TO *STAY*--LOOK FOR AN *OPENING*--!

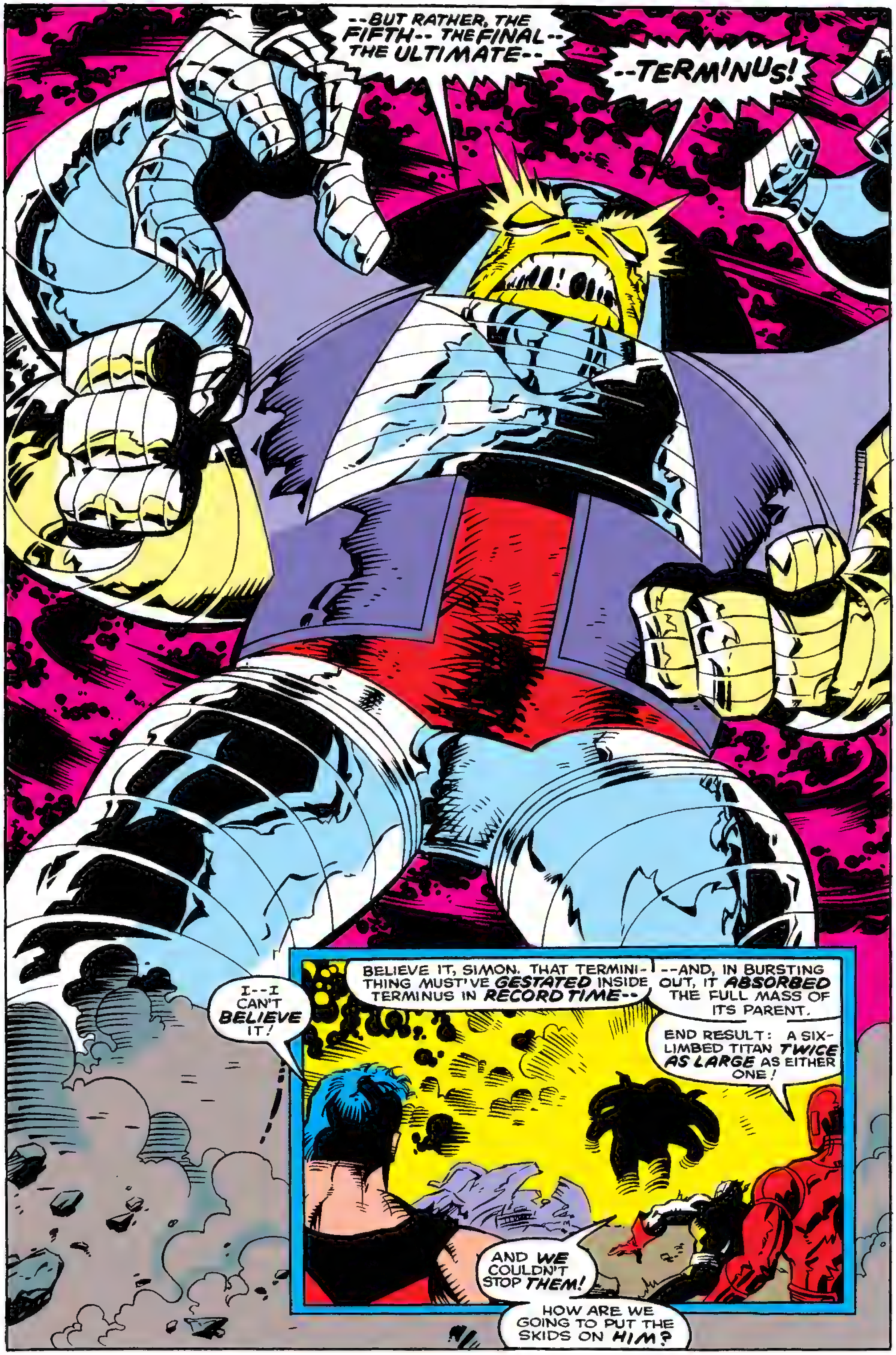

THE ENERGY EXPENDITURE OF US BOTH IS NOW AT ITS PEAK, TERMINUS-SPAWN.
YOU HAVE INHERITED MY PROGRAMMING-- AND THUS YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS!
YES--!
LORD, I WISH WE DID--
--BUT ALL WE GET TO DO IS DODGE THE TERMINI'S LANCE, AND-- HUH?
TERMINUS HURLED HIS OWN LANCE AFTER JUNIOR'S!
BUT WHY? I THOUGHT THEY WERE THE SOURCE OF MUCH OF THEIR POWER!
THEY ARE SIMON. I DON'T GET IT, EITHER.
IT MUST MEAN--OUR FOES FEEL THEY NO LONGER NEED THEM!
TERMINUS DOESN'T NEED HIS, THAT'S FOR SURE!
HE'S ABOUT TO LOWER THE BOOM ON HIS SON AND HEIR!
CORRECTION: MAKE THAT--ON HIS EX-HEIR!
BUT--HE'S NOT HITTING HIM?
THEN--EXACTLY WHAT IS TERMINUS DOING TO HIM?
CAN'T MAKE OUT THE LOWER-- IN THIS GLARE!

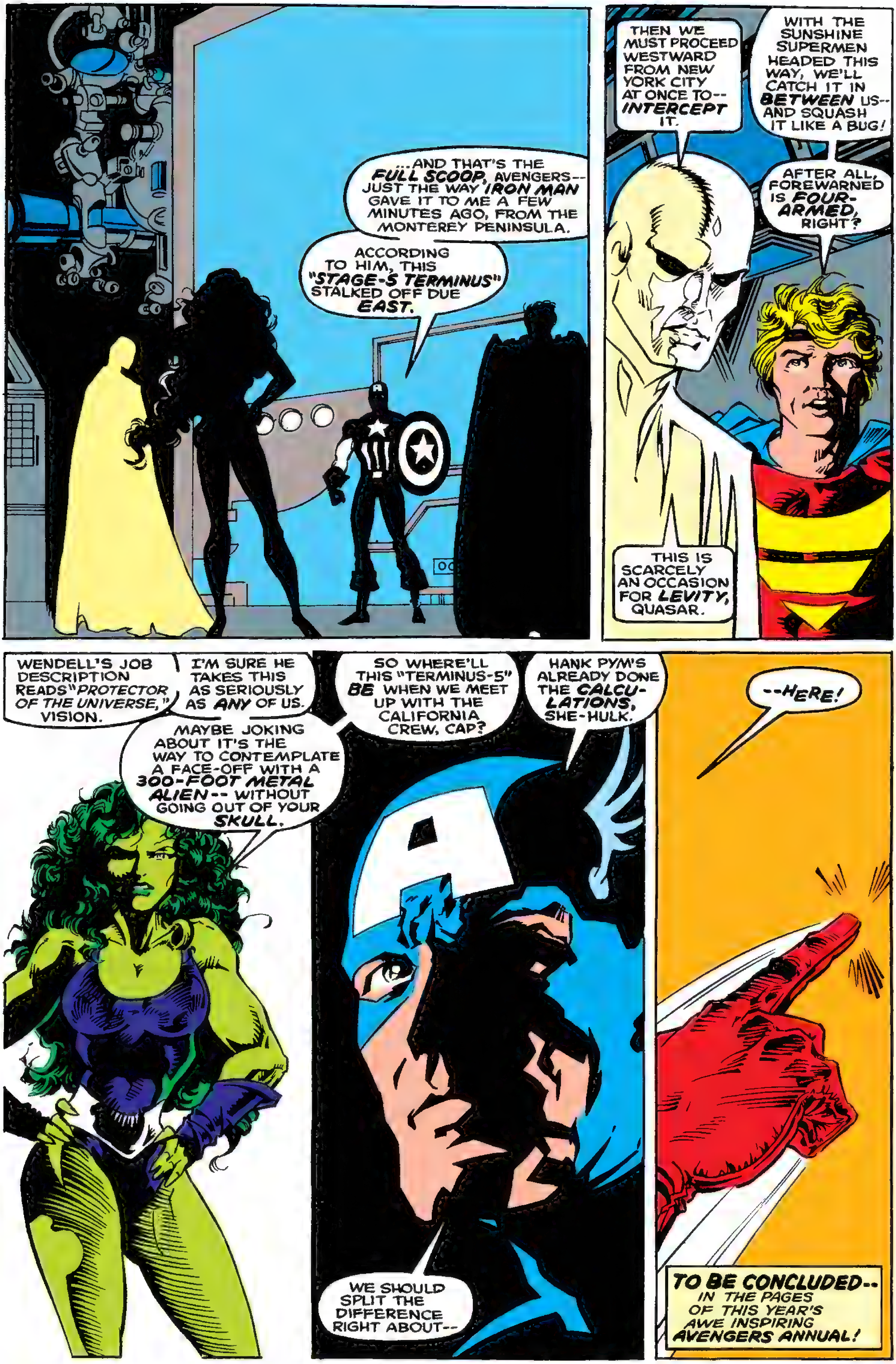

HE'S OPENING HIS MOUTH, IRON MAN--
--OPENING IT WIDE--
--WIDER STILL, UNTIL--
HOLY HANNAH!
LOOK AT THE TERMINI-CREATURE!
HE'S SHRUNK --TO ONLY A FRACTION OF HIS FORMER SIZE--
--AND TERMINUS IS SWALLOWING HIM!
I DON'T GET IT!
DID DEMON BEGET DEMON-- ONLY THAT THE ELDER MIGHT DEVOUR THE YOUNGER?
SOMEHOW--THERE MUST BE MORE TO IT THAN THAT.
HOLD IT! SOMETHING'S HAPPENING!
TERMINUS --HE'S ABOUT TO--




G-GOOD GRAVY! THAT WAS--THE *MIGHTIEST* EXPLOSION-- I EVER *DIDN'T* HEAR!
'TWAS LIKE UNTO THE CONFLAGRATION WHEN *ZEUS* DID HURL HIS THUNDERBOLTS IN THE MIDST OF *TYPHON'S* CHAOS-HORDES!
BUT, AT LEAST--BOTH ALIENS WERE *DESTROYED!*
WERE THEY, WASP?
THEN--WHAT IN BLAZES IS *THAT?*


INSIDE THE *MAELSTROM* CREATED BY THE BLAST--
--SOMETHING *LIVES*--
--SOMETHING *HUGE!*
NOT "SOMETHING," MORTAL INSECT--


--BUT RATHER, THE FIFTH-- THE FINAL-- THE ULTIMATE--
--TERMINUS!
I--I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
BELIEVE IT, SIMON. THAT TERMINI-THING MUST'VE GESTATED INSIDE TERMINUS IN RECORD TIME--
--AND, IN BURSTING OUT, IT ABSORBED THE FULL MASS OF ITS PARENT.
END RESULT: A SIX-LIMBED TITAN TWICE AS LARGE AS EITHER ONE!
AND WE COULDN'T STOP THEM!
HOW ARE WE GOING TO PUT THE SKIDS ON HIM?


...AND THAT'S THE **FULL SCOOP**, AVENGERS-- JUST THE WAY *IRON MAN* GAVE IT TO ME A FEW MINUTES AGO, FROM THE MONTEREY PENINSULA.
ACCORDING TO HIM, THIS **"STAGE-5 TERMINUS"** STALKED OFF DUE **EAST**.
THEN WE MUST PROCEED WESTWARD FROM NEW YORK CITY AT ONCE TO-- **INTERCEPT** IT.
WITH THE SUNSHINE SUPERMEN HEADED THIS WAY, WE'LL CATCH IT IN **BETWEEN** US-- AND SQUASH IT LIKE A BUG!
AFTER ALL, FOREWARNED IS **FOUR-ARMED**, RIGHT?
THIS IS SCARCELY AN OCCASION FOR **LEVITY**, QUASAR.
WENDELL'S JOB DESCRIPTION READS "*PROTECTOR OF THE UNIVERSE*," VISION.
I'M SURE HE TAKES THIS AS SERIOUSLY AS **ANY** OF US.
MAYBE JOKING ABOUT IT'S THE WAY TO CONTEMPLATE A FACE-OFF WITH A **300-FOOT METAL ALIEN**-- WITHOUT GOING OUT OF YOUR **SKULL**.
SO WHERE'LL THIS "TERMINUS-5" **BE** WHEN WE MEET UP WITH THE CALIFORNIA CREW, CAP?
HANK PYM'S ALREADY DONE THE **CALCULATIONS**, SHE-HULK.
WE SHOULD SPLIT THE DIFFERENCE RIGHT ABOUT--
--**HERE!**
TO BE CONCLUDED-- *IN THE PAGES OF THIS YEAR'S AWE INSPIRING* **AVENGERS ANNUAL!**

MARVEL ANNUAL
THE TERMINUS FACTOR
64 PAGES
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APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
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DESTROY ALL MONSTERS!

STAN LEE PRESENTS:

THE TERMINUS FACTOR

STAGE FIVE

AVENGERS

HOWARD MACKIE
EDITOR

LEN KAMINSKI
ASSISTANT EDITOR

TOM DeFALCO
EDITOR IN CHIEF

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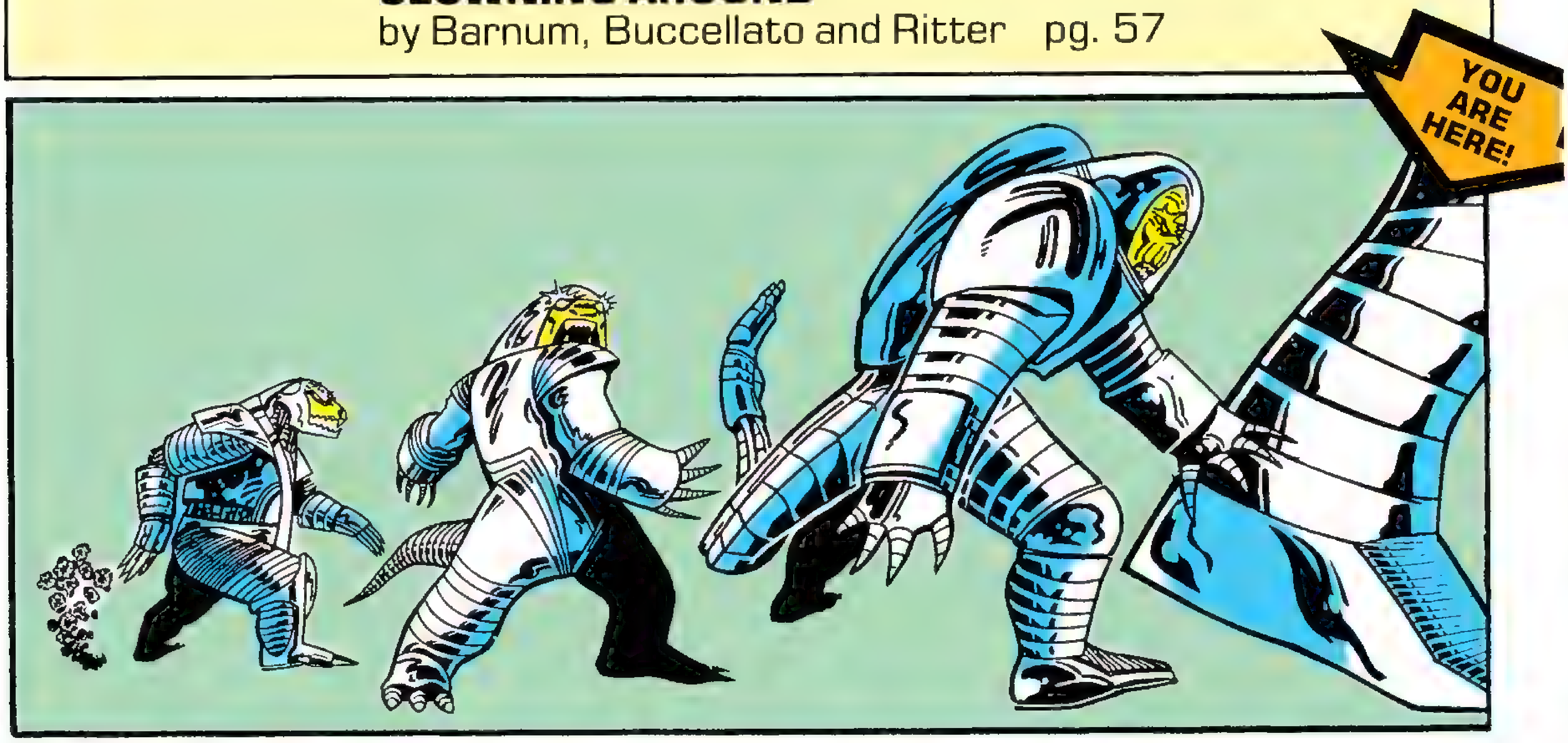

YOU ARE HERE!

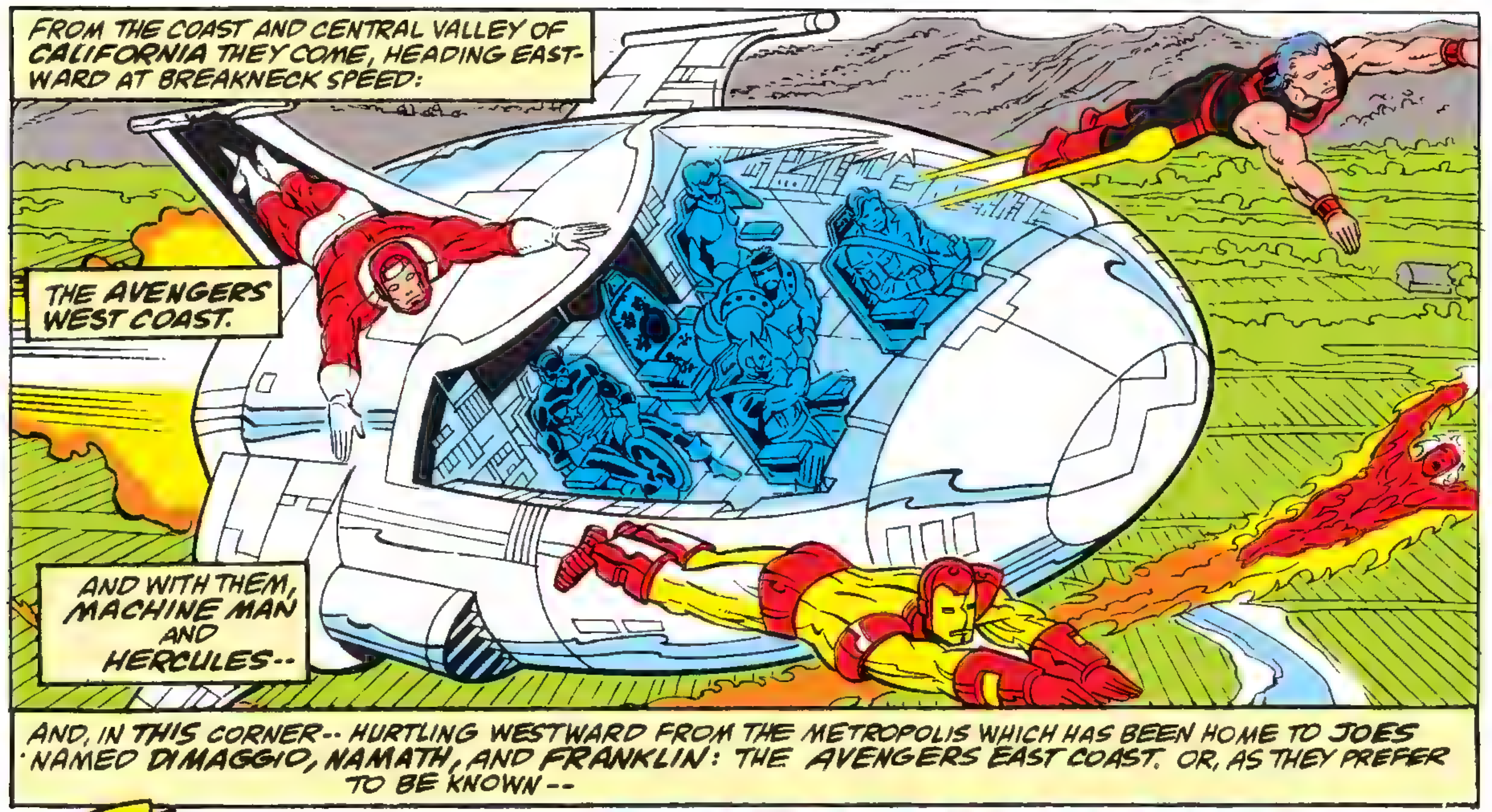
STAGE ONE:
CAPTAIN AMERICA ANNUAL #9

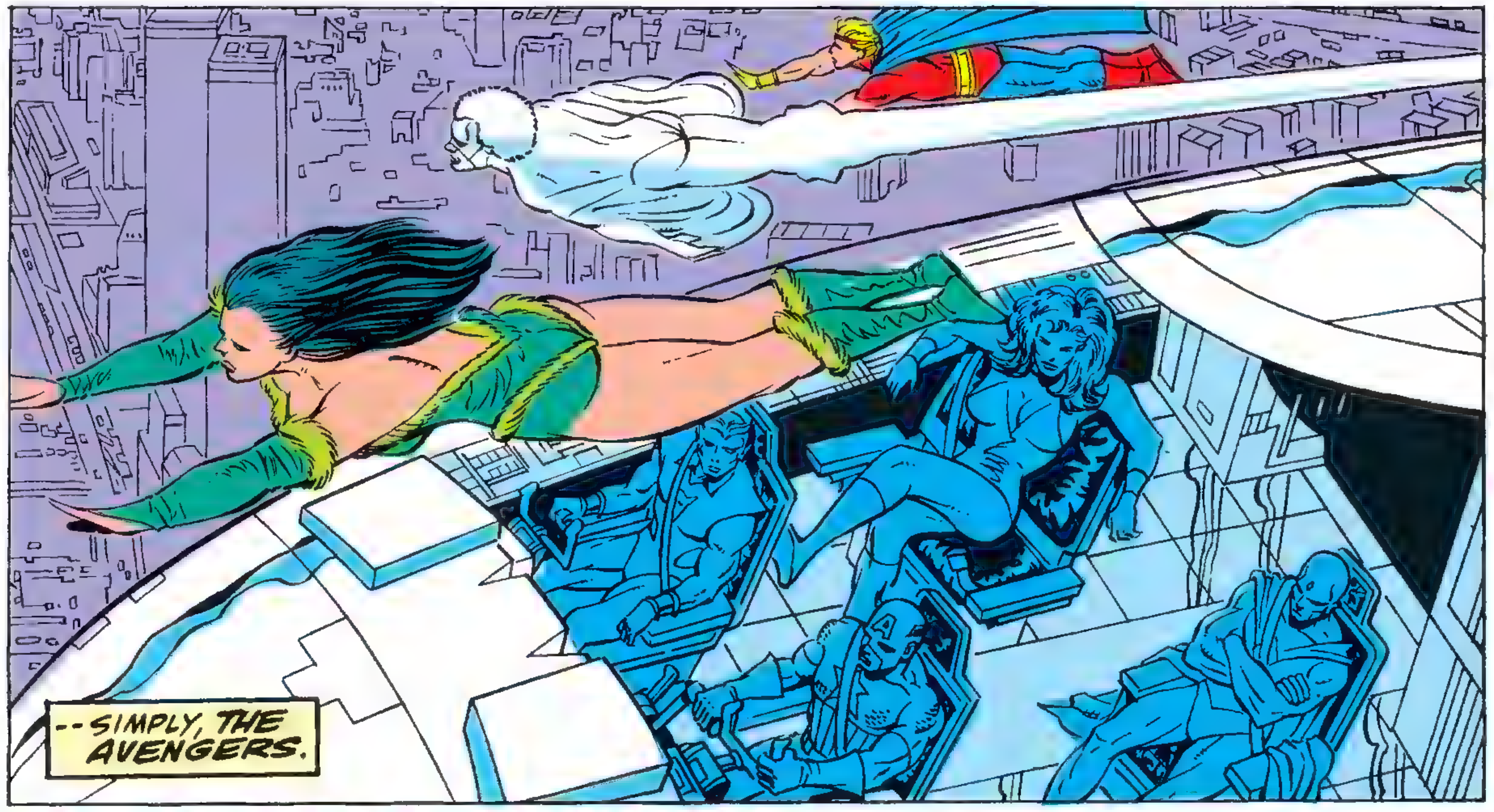
STAGE TWO:
IRON MAN ANNUAL #11

STAGE THREE:
MIGHTY THOR ANNUAL #15

STAGE FOUR:
AVENGERS WEST COAST ANNUAL #5

STAGE FIVE:
AVENGERS ANNUAL #19


FROM THE COAST AND CENTRAL VALLEY OF CALIFORNIA THEY COME, HEADING EASTWARD AT BREAKNECK SPEED:
THE AVENGERS WEST COAST.
AND WITH THEM, MACHINE MAN AND HERCULES--
AND, IN THIS CORNER-- HURTLING WESTWARD FROM THE METROPOLIS WHICH HAS BEEN HOME TO JOES NAMED DIMAGGIO, NAMATH, AND FRANKLIN: THE AVENGERS EAST COAST. OR, AS THEY PREFER TO BE KNOWN--


--SIMPLY, THE AVENGERS.

Stan Lee PRESENTS:

BEAT ME IN ST. LOUIS...

ROY & DANN THOMAS ..... WRITERS
HERB TRIMPE .... PENCILER
JEFF ALBRECHT ...... INKER
RICK PARKER .... LETTERER
PAUL BECTON ... COLORIST
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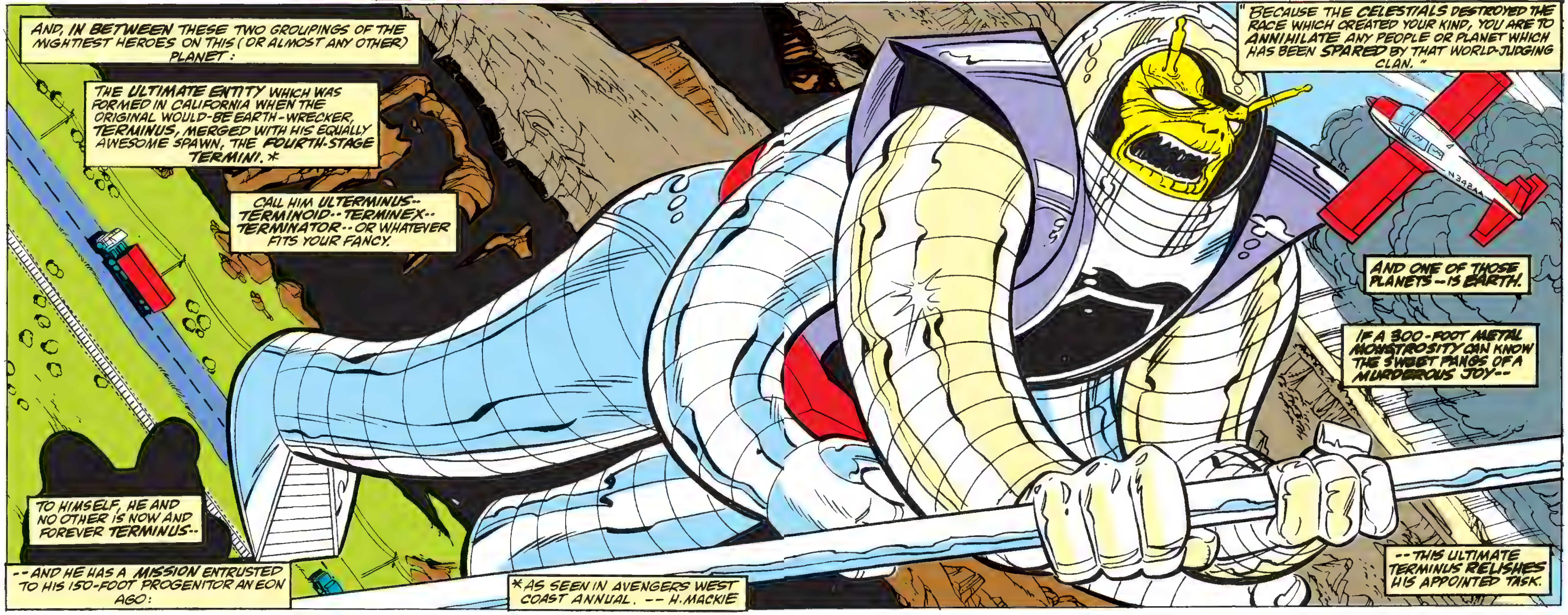
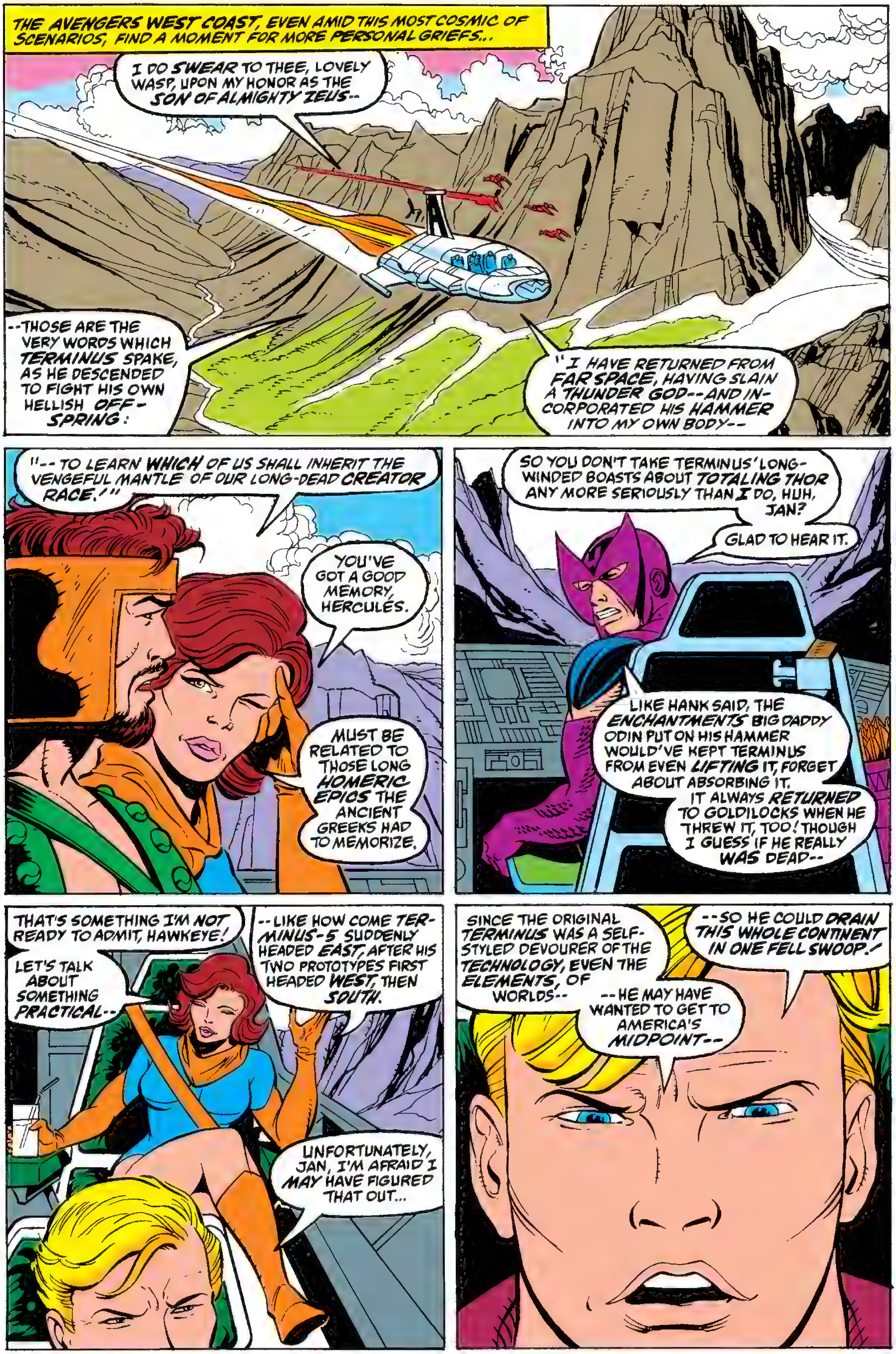
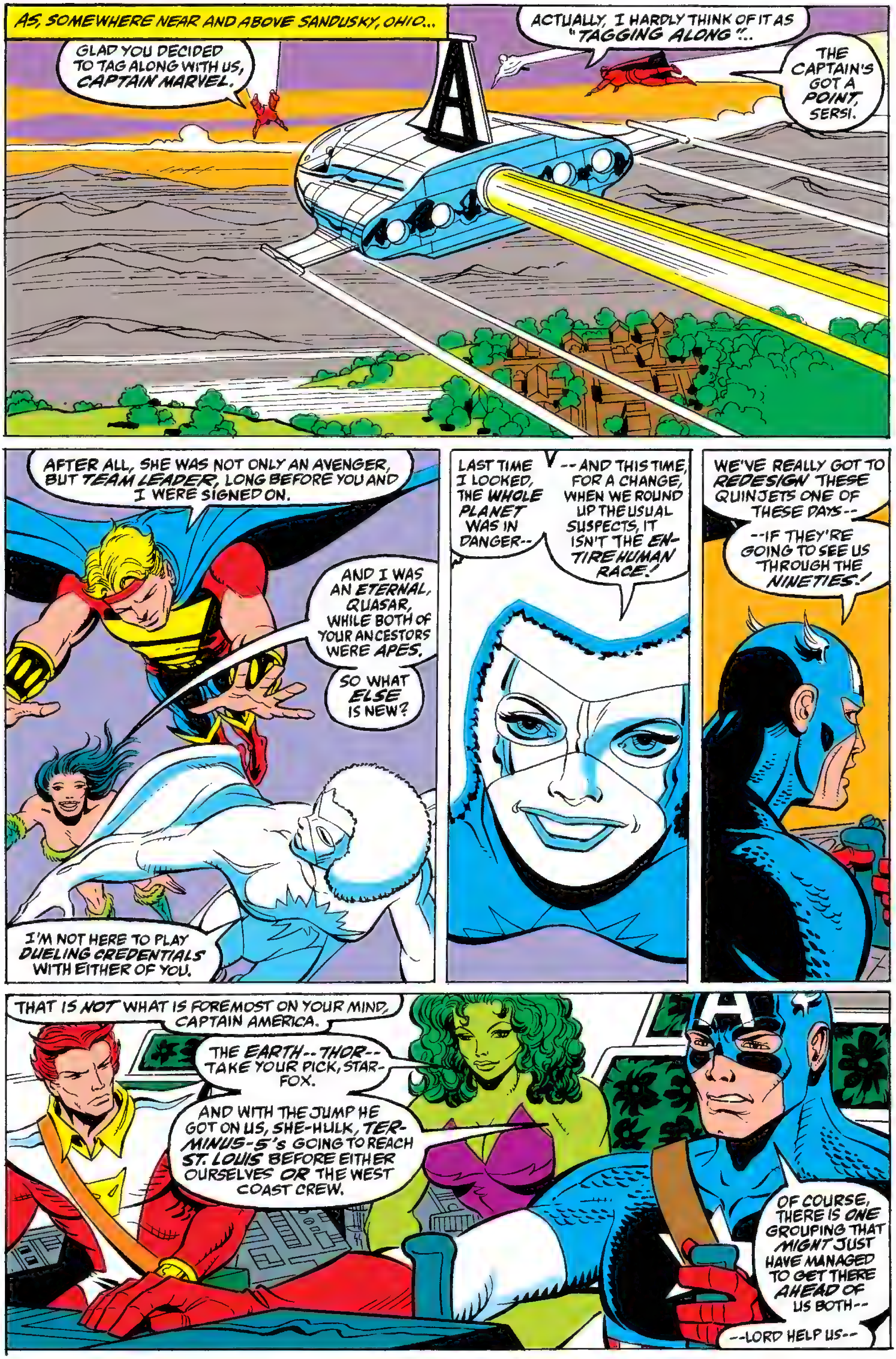
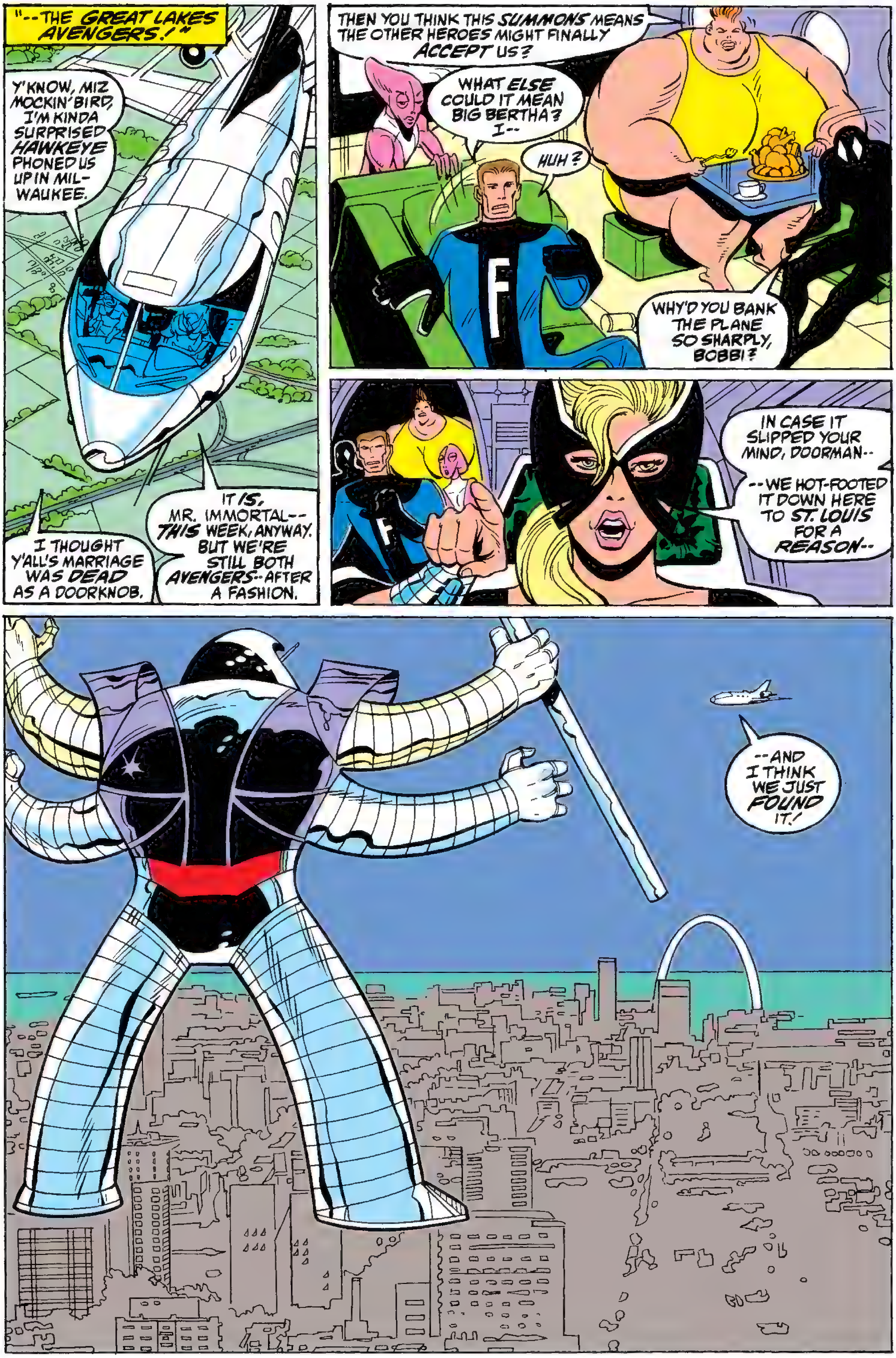
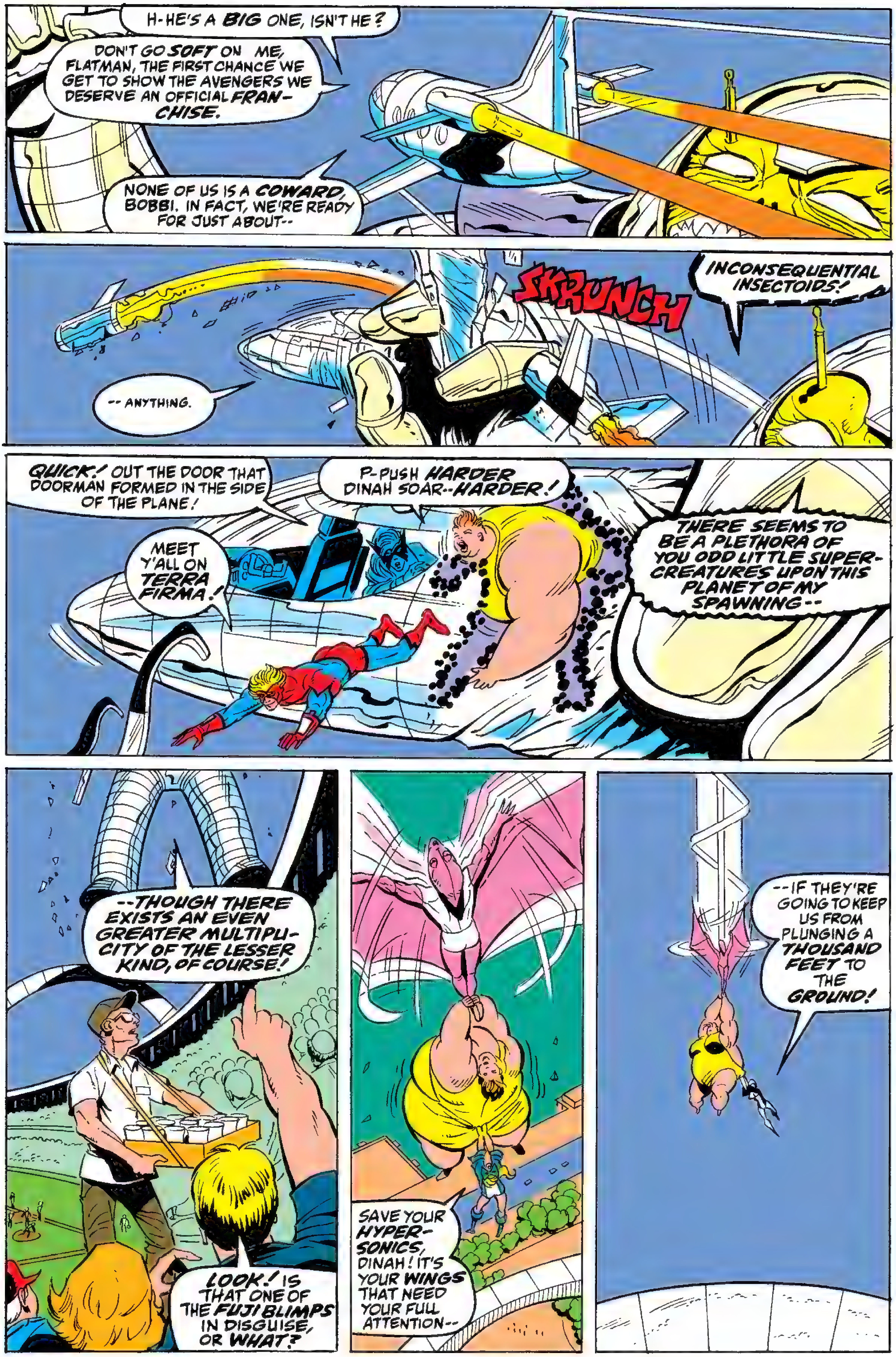

AND, IN BETWEEN THESE TWO GROUPINGS OF THE MIGHTIEST HEROES ON THIS (OR ALMOST ANY OTHER) PLANET:
THE ULTIMATE ENTITY WHICH WAS FORMED IN CALIFORNIA WHEN THE ORIGINAL WOULD-BE EARTH-WRECKER, TERMINUS, MERGED WITH HIS EQUALLY AWESOME SPAWN, THE FOURTH-STAGE TERMINI.*
CALL HIM ULTERMINUS-- TERMINOID-- TERMINEX-- TERMINATOR-- OR WHATEVER FITS YOUR FANCY.
TO HIMSELF, HE AND NO OTHER IS NOW AND FOREVER TERMINUS--
--AND HE HAS A MISSION ENTRUSTED TO HIS 150-FOOT PROGENITOR AN EON AGO:
"BECAUSE THE CELESTIALS DESTROYED THE RACE WHICH CREATED YOUR KIND, YOU ARE TO ANNIHILATE ANY PEOPLE OR PLANET WHICH HAS BEEN SPARED BY THAT WORLD-JUDGING CLAN."
AND ONE OF THOSE PLANETS--IS EARTH.
IF A 300-FOOT METAL MONSTROSITY CAN KNOW THE SWEET PANGS OF A MURDEROUS JOY--
--THIS ULTIMATE TERMINUS RELISHES HIS APPOINTED TASK.
N342AA

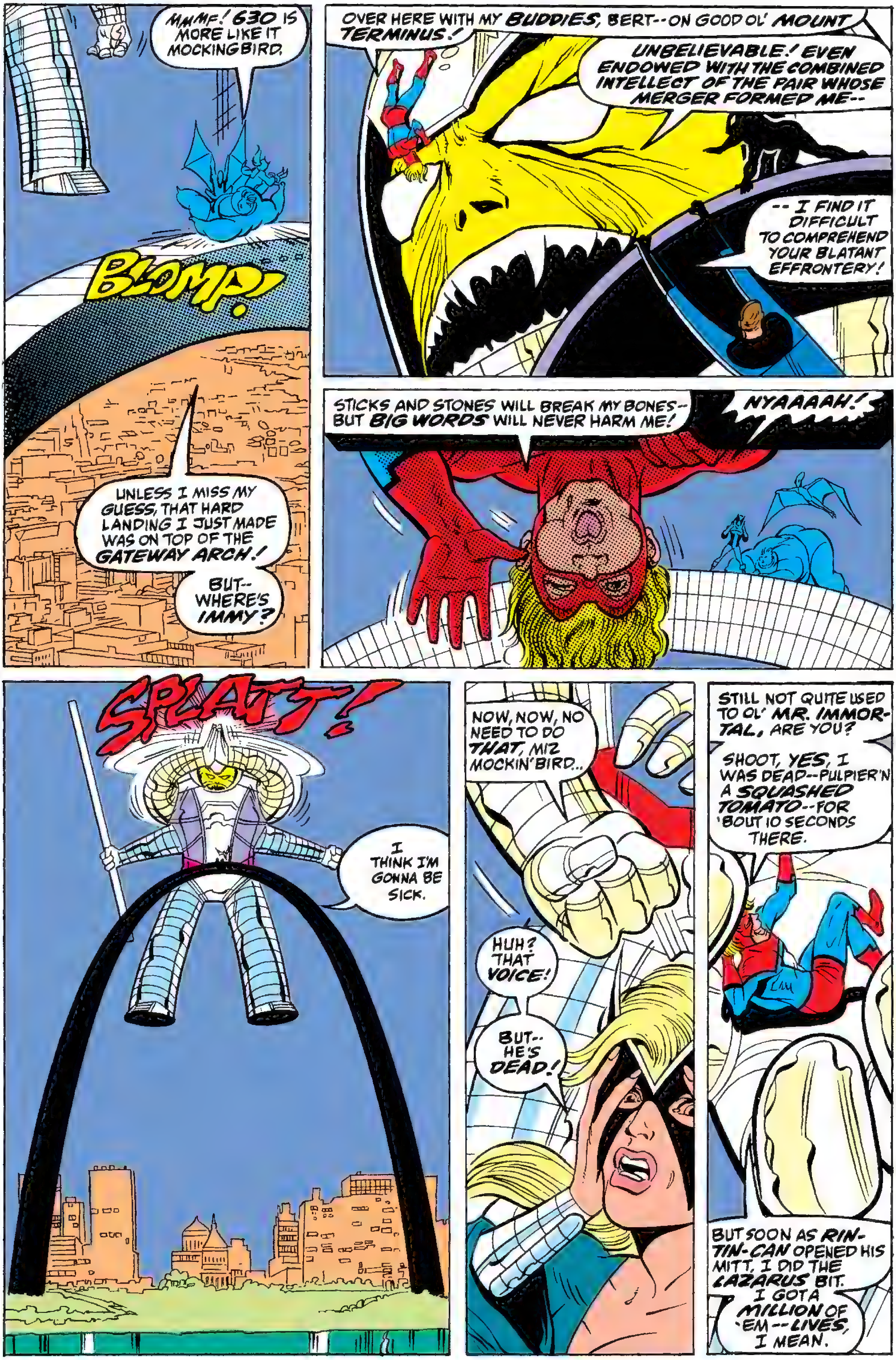
*AS SEEN IN AVENGERS WEST COAST ANNUAL. -- H. MACKIE

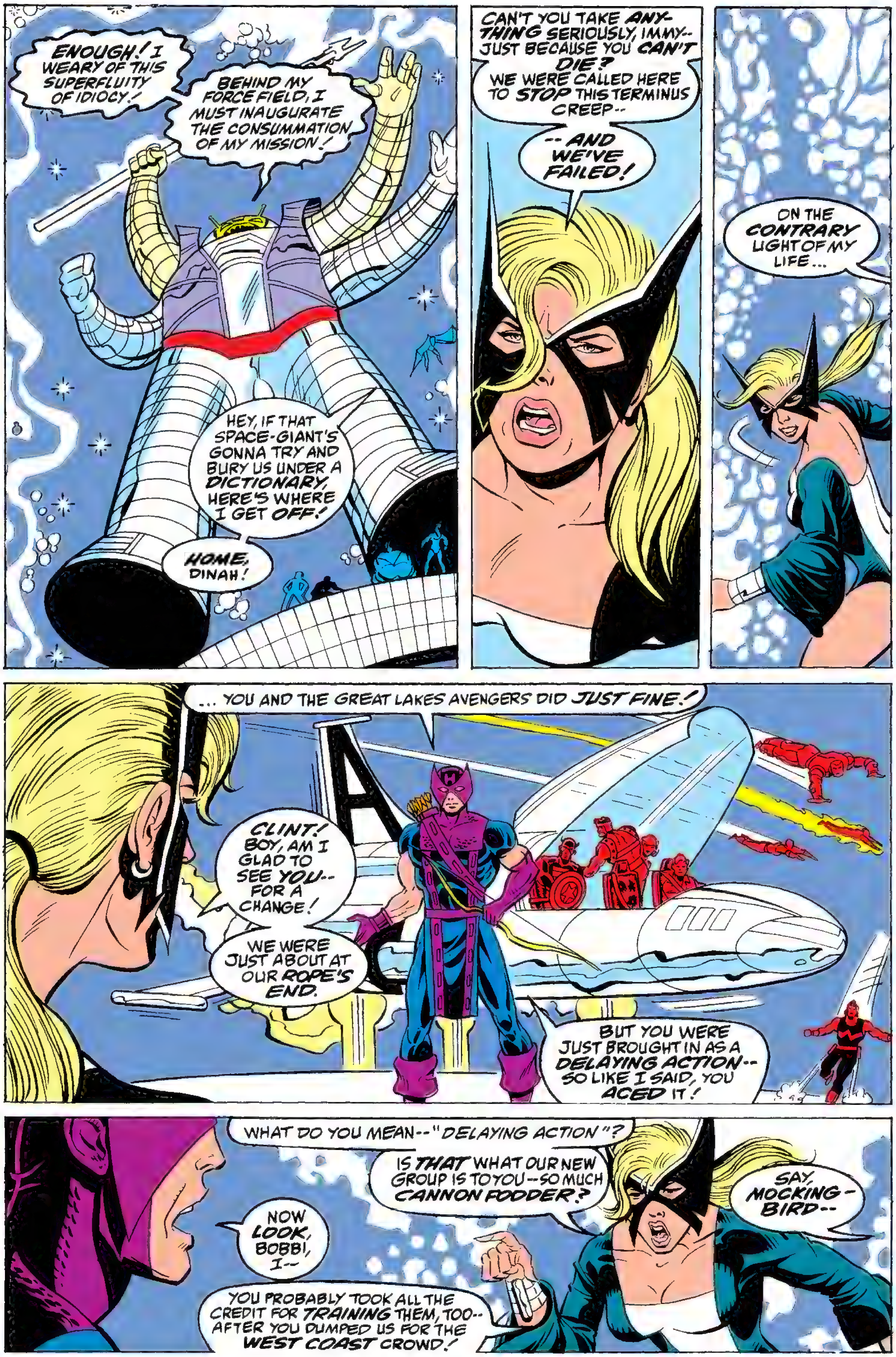

THE AVENGERS WEST COAST, EVEN AMID THIS MOST COSMIC OF SCENARIOS, FIND A MOMENT FOR MORE PERSONAL GRIEFS...
I DO SWEAR TO THEE, LOVELY WASP, UPON MY HONOR AS THE SON OF ALMIGHTY ZEUS--
--THOSE ARE THE VERY WORDS WHICH TERMINUS SPAKE, AS HE DESCENDED TO FIGHT HIS OWN HELLISH OFF-SPRING:
"I HAVE RETURNED FROM FAR SPACE, HAVING SLAIN A THUNDER GOD--AND INCORPORATED HIS HAMMER INTO MY OWN BODY--
"--TO LEARN WHICH OF US SHALL INHERIT THE VENGEFUL MANTLE OF OUR LONG-DEAD CREATOR RACE!"
YOU'VE GOT A GOOD MEMORY, HERCULES.
MUST BE RELATED TO THOSE LONG HOMERIC EPICS THE ANCIENT GREEKS HAD TO MEMORIZE.
SO YOU DON'T TAKE TERMINUS' LONG-WINDED BOASTS ABOUT TOTALING THOR ANY MORE SERIOUSLY THAN I DO, HUH, JAN?
GLAD TO HEAR IT.
LIKE HANK SAID, THE ENCHANTMENTS BIG DADDY ODIN PUT ON HIS HAMMER WOULD'VE KEPT TERMINUS FROM EVEN LIFTING IT, FORGET ABOUT ABSORBING IT.
IT ALWAYS RETURNED TO GOLDILOCKS WHEN HE THREW IT, TOO! THOUGH I GUESS IF HE REALLY WAS DEAD--
THAT'S SOMETHING I'M NOT READY TO ADMIT, HAWKEYE!
LET'S TALK ABOUT SOMETHING PRACTICAL--
--LIKE HOW COME TERMINUS-5 SUDDENLY HEADED EAST, AFTER HIS TWO PROTOTYPES FIRST HEADED WEST, THEN SOUTH.
UNFORTUNATELY, JAN, I'M AFRAID I MAY HAVE FIGURED THAT OUT...
SINCE THE ORIGINAL TERMINUS WAS A SELF-STYLED DEVOURER OF THE TECHNOLOGY, EVEN THE ELEMENTS, OF WORLDS--
--HE MAY HAVE WANTED TO GET TO AMERICA'S MIDPOINT--
--SO HE COULD DRAIN THIS WHOLE CONTINENT IN ONE FELL SWOOP!

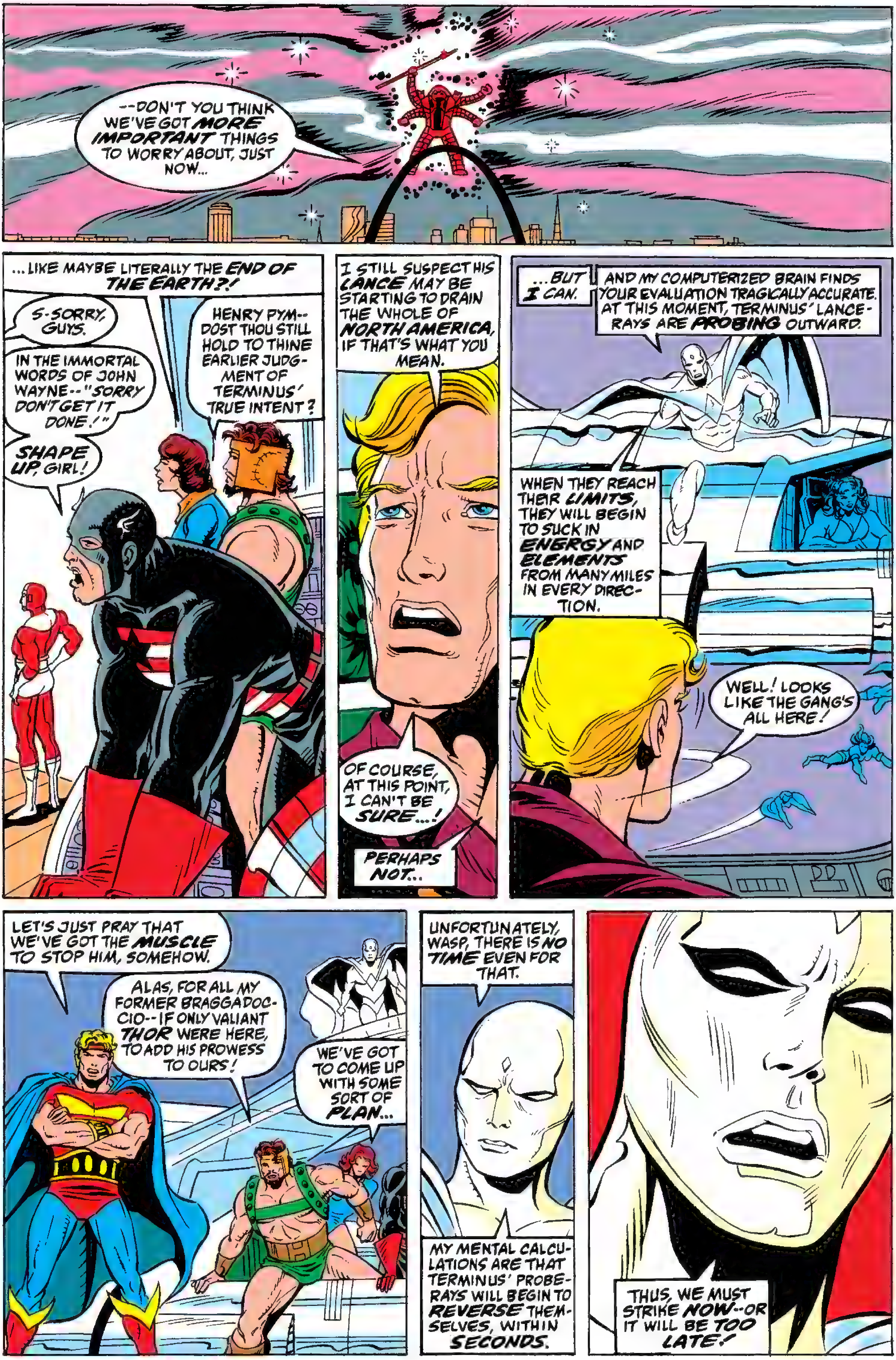

AS, SOMEWHERE NEAR AND ABOVE SANDUSKY, OHIO...
GLAD YOU DECIDED TO TAG ALONG WITH US, CAPTAIN MARVEL.
ACTUALLY, I HARDLY THINK OF IT AS "TAGGING ALONG"...
THE CAPTAIN'S GOT A POINT, SERSI.
AFTER ALL, SHE WAS NOT ONLY AN AVENGER, BUT TEAM LEADER, LONG BEFORE YOU AND I WERE SIGNED ON.
AND I WAS AN ETERNAL, QUASAR, WHILE BOTH OF YOUR ANCESTORS WERE APES.
SO WHAT ELSE IS NEW?
I'M NOT HERE TO PLAY DUELING CREDENTIALS WITH EITHER OF YOU.
LAST TIME I LOOKED, THE WHOLE PLANET WAS IN DANGER--
--AND THIS TIME, FOR A CHANGE, WHEN WE ROUND UP THE USUAL SUSPECTS, IT ISN'T THE ENTIRE HUMAN RACE!
WE'VE REALLY GOT TO REDESIGN THESE QUINJETS ONE OF THESE DAYS--
--IF THEY'RE GOING TO SEE US THROUGH THE NINETIES!
THAT IS NOT WHAT IS FOREMOST ON YOUR MIND, CAPTAIN AMERICA.
THE EARTH--THOR--TAKE YOUR PICK, STARFOX.
AND WITH THE JUMP HE GOT ON US, SHE-HULK, TERMINUS-5'S GOING TO REACH ST. LOUIS BEFORE EITHER OURSELVES OR THE WEST COAST CREW.
OF COURSE, THERE IS ONE GROUPING THAT MIGHT JUST HAVE MANAGED TO GET THERE AHEAD OF US BOTH--
--LORD HELP US--

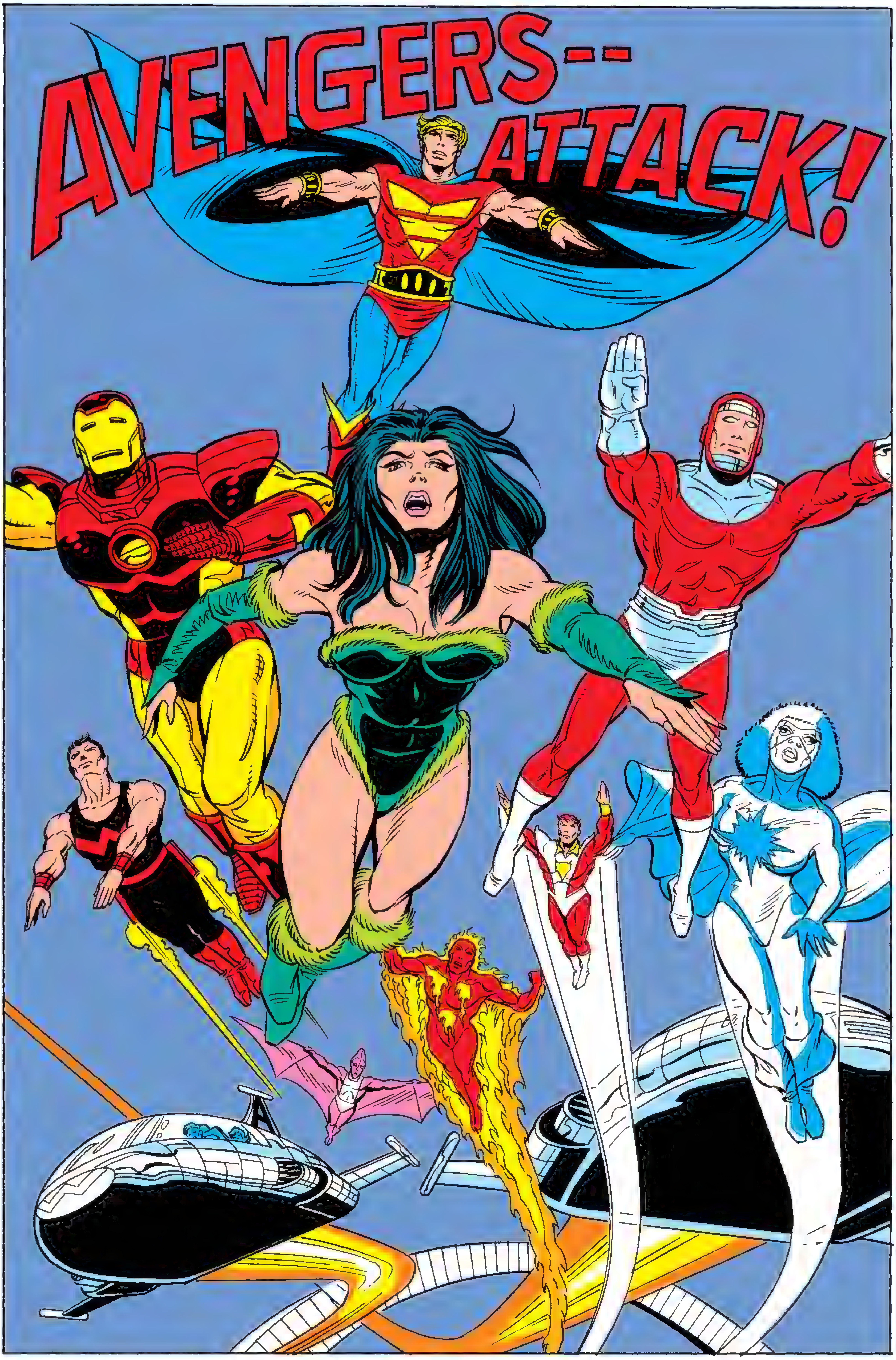

"--THE GREAT LAKES AVENGERS!"
Y'KNOW, MIZ MOCKIN' BIRD, I'M KINDA SURPRISED HAWKEYE PHONED US UP IN MILWAUKEE.
I THOUGHT Y'ALL'S MARRIAGE WAS DEAD AS A DOORKNOB.
IT IS, MR. IMMORTAL-- THIS WEEK, ANYWAY. BUT WE'RE STILL BOTH AVENGERS--AFTER A FASHION.
THEN YOU THINK THIS SUMMONS MEANS THE OTHER HEROES MIGHT FINALLY ACCEPT US?
WHAT ELSE COULD IT MEAN BIG BERTHA? I--
HUH?
WHY'D YOU BANK THE PLANE SO SHARPLY, BOBBI?
IN CASE IT SLIPPED YOUR MIND, DOORMAN--
--WE HOT-FOOTED IT DOWN HERE TO ST. LOUIS FOR A REASON--
--AND I THINK WE JUST FOUND IT!

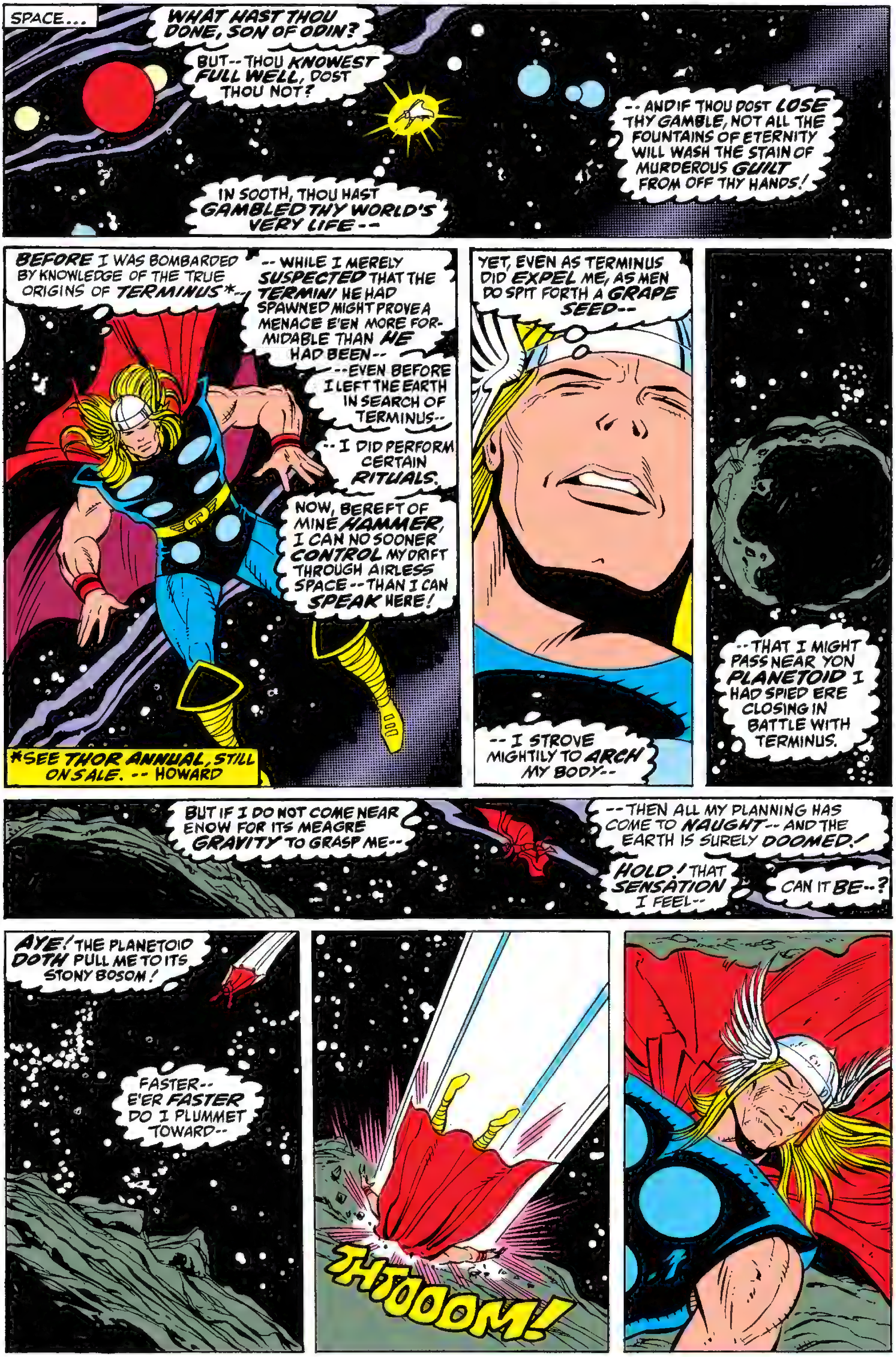

H-HE'S A **BIG** ONE, ISN'T HE?
DON'T GO **SOFT** ON ME, FLATMAN, THE FIRST CHANCE WE GET TO SHOW THE AVENGERS WE DESERVE AN OFFICIAL **FRANCHISE.**
NONE OF US IS A **COWARD,** BOBBI. IN FACT, WE'RE READY FOR JUST ABOUT--
SKRUNCH
INCONSEQUENTIAL INSECTOIDS!
--ANYTHING.
QUICK! OUT THE DOOR THAT DOORMAN FORMED IN THE SIDE OF THE PLANE!
P-PUSH **HARDER** DINAH SOAR--**HARDER!**
MEET Y'ALL ON **TERRA FIRMA!**
THERE SEEMS TO BE A PLETHORA OF YOU ODD LITTLE SUPER-CREATURES UPON THIS PLANET OF MY SPAWNING--
--THOUGH THERE EXISTS AN EVEN GREATER MULTIPLICITY OF THE LESSER KIND, OF COURSE!
LOOK! IS THAT ONE OF THE **FUJI BLIMPS** IN DISGUISE, OR **WHAT?**
SAVE YOUR **HYPERSONICS,** DINAH! IT'S YOUR **WINGS** THAT NEED YOUR FULL ATTENTION--
--IF THEY'RE GOING TO KEEP US FROM PLUNGING A **THOUSAND FEET** TO THE **GROUND!**

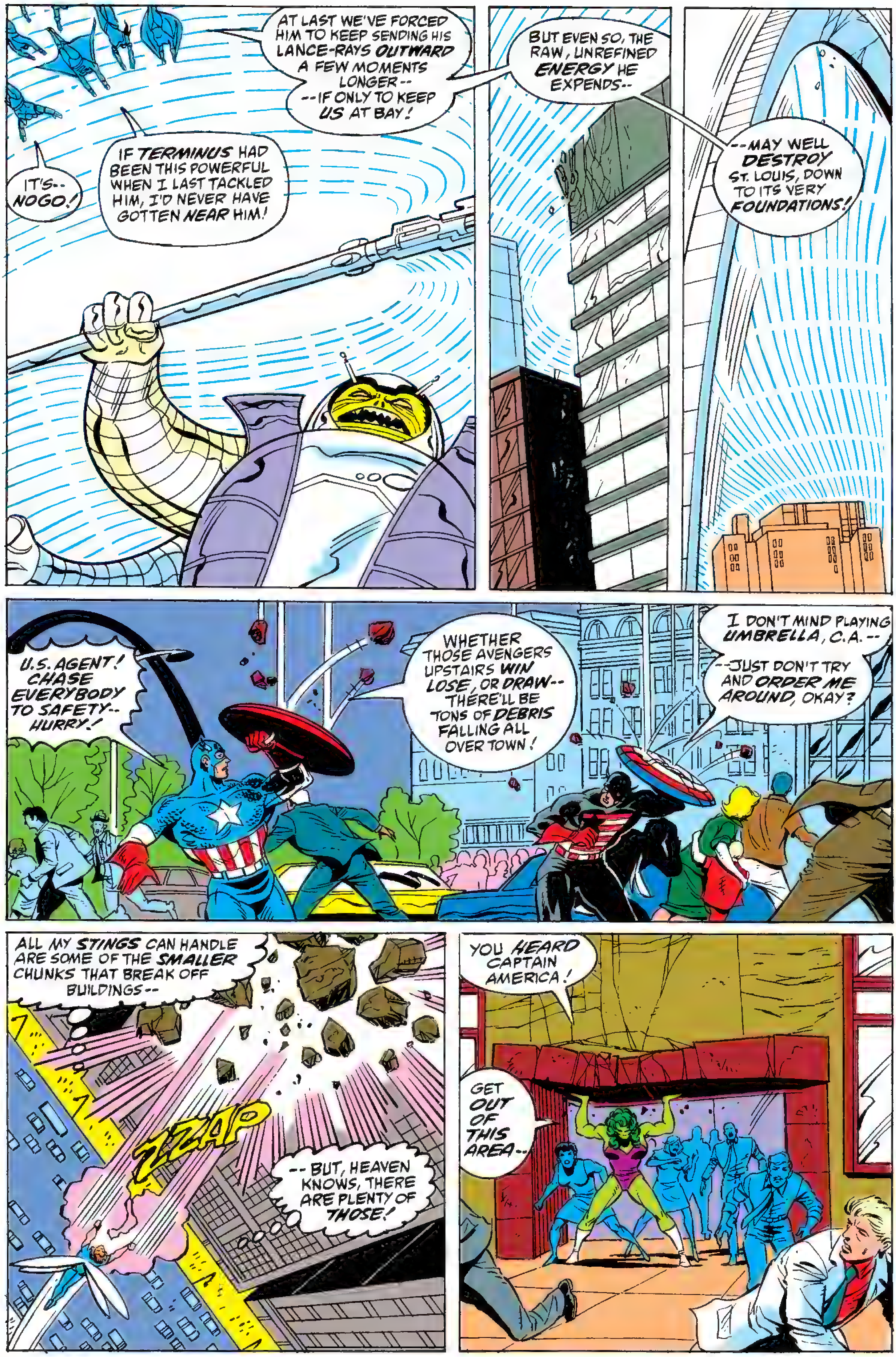

MMMF! 630 IS MORE LIKE IT, MOCKINGBIRD.
BLOMP!
UNLESS I MISS MY GUESS, THAT HARD LANDING I JUST MADE WAS ON TOP OF THE GATEWAY ARCH!
BUT-- WHERE'S IMMY?
OVER HERE WITH MY BUDDIES, BERT--ON GOOD OL' MOUNT TERMINUS!
UNBELIEVABLE! EVEN ENDOWED WITH THE COMBINED INTELLECT OF THE PAIR WHOSE MERGER FORMED ME--
--I FIND IT DIFFICULT TO COMPREHEND YOUR BLATANT EFFRONTERY!
STICKS AND STONES WILL BREAK MY BONES--BUT BIG WORDS WILL NEVER HARM ME!
NYAAAAH!
SPLATT!
I THINK I'M GONNA BE SICK.
NOW, NOW, NO NEED TO DO THAT, MIZ MOCKIN' BIRD...
HUH? THAT VOICE!
BUT-- HE'S DEAD!
STILL NOT QUITE USED TO OL' MR. IMMORTAL, ARE YOU?
SHOOT, YES, I WAS DEAD--PULPIER'N A SQUASHED TOMATO--FOR 'BOUT 10 SECONDS THERE.
BUT SOON AS RIN-TIN-CAN OPENED HIS MITT, I DID THE LAZARUS BIT. I GOT A MILLION OF 'EM--LIVES, I MEAN.

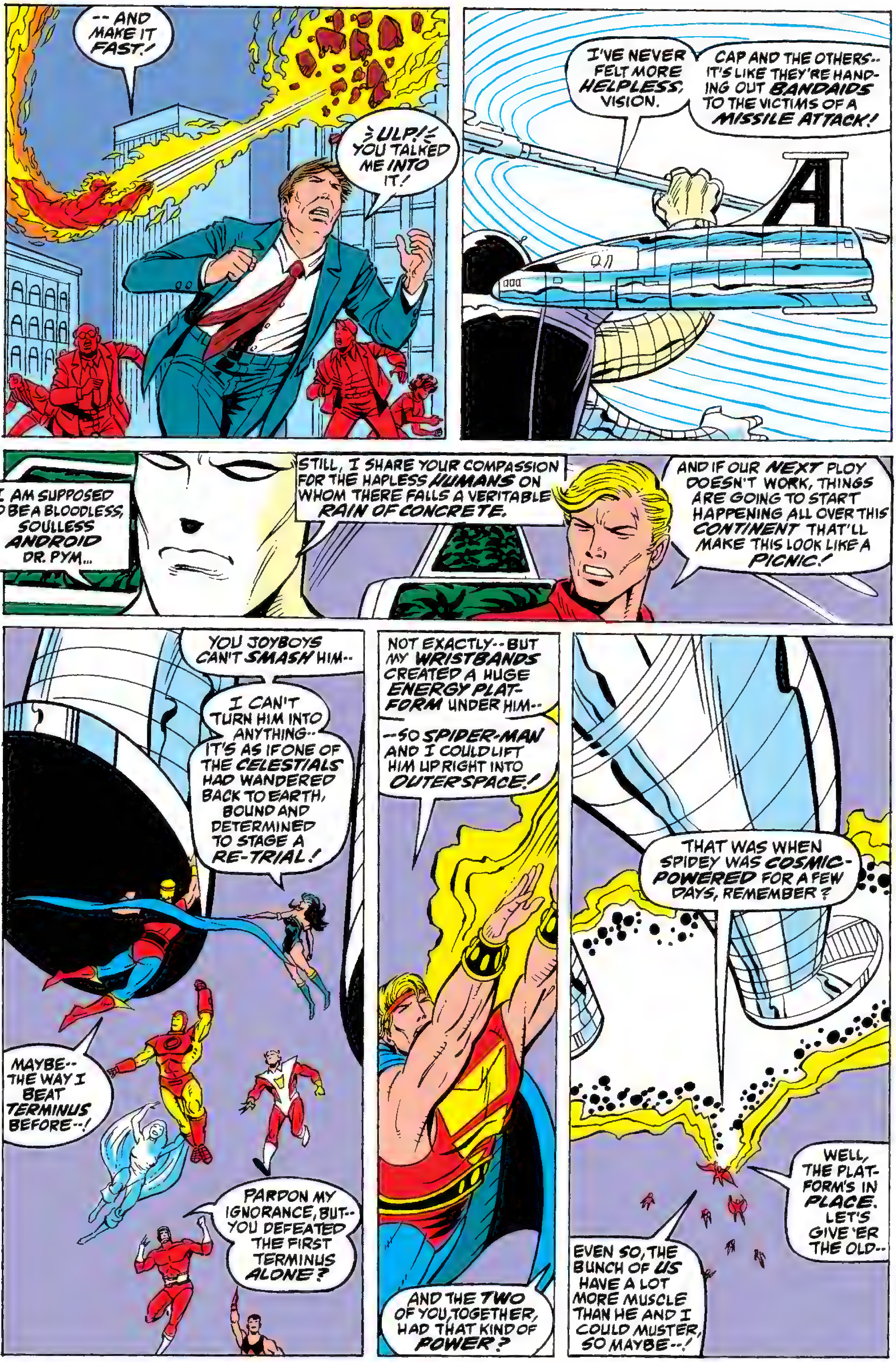

ENOUGH! I WEARY OF THIS SUPERFLUITY OF IDIOCY!
BEHIND MY FORCE FIELD, I MUST INAUGURATE THE CONSUMMATION OF MY MISSION!
HEY, IF THAT SPACE-GIANT'S GONNA TRY AND BURY US UNDER A DICTIONARY, HERE'S WHERE I GET OFF!
HOME, DINAH!
CAN'T YOU TAKE ANYTHING SERIOUSLY, IMMY-- JUST BECAUSE YOU CAN'T DIE? WE WERE CALLED HERE TO STOP THIS TERMINUS CREEP--
--AND WE'VE FAILED!
ON THE CONTRARY LIGHT OF MY LIFE...
...YOU AND THE GREAT LAKES AVENGERS DID JUST FINE!
CLINT! BOY, AM I GLAD TO SEE YOU-- FOR A CHANGE!
WE WERE JUST ABOUT AT OUR ROPE'S END.
BUT YOU WERE JUST BROUGHT IN AS A DELAYING ACTION-- SO LIKE I SAID, YOU ACED IT!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN--"DELAYING ACTION"?
IS THAT WHAT OUR NEW GROUP IS TO YOU--SO MUCH CANNON FODDER?
NOW LOOK, BOBBI, I--
YOU PROBABLY TOOK ALL THE CREDIT FOR TRAINING THEM, TOO-- AFTER YOU DUMPED US FOR THE WEST COAST CROWD!
SAY, MOCKING-BIRD--

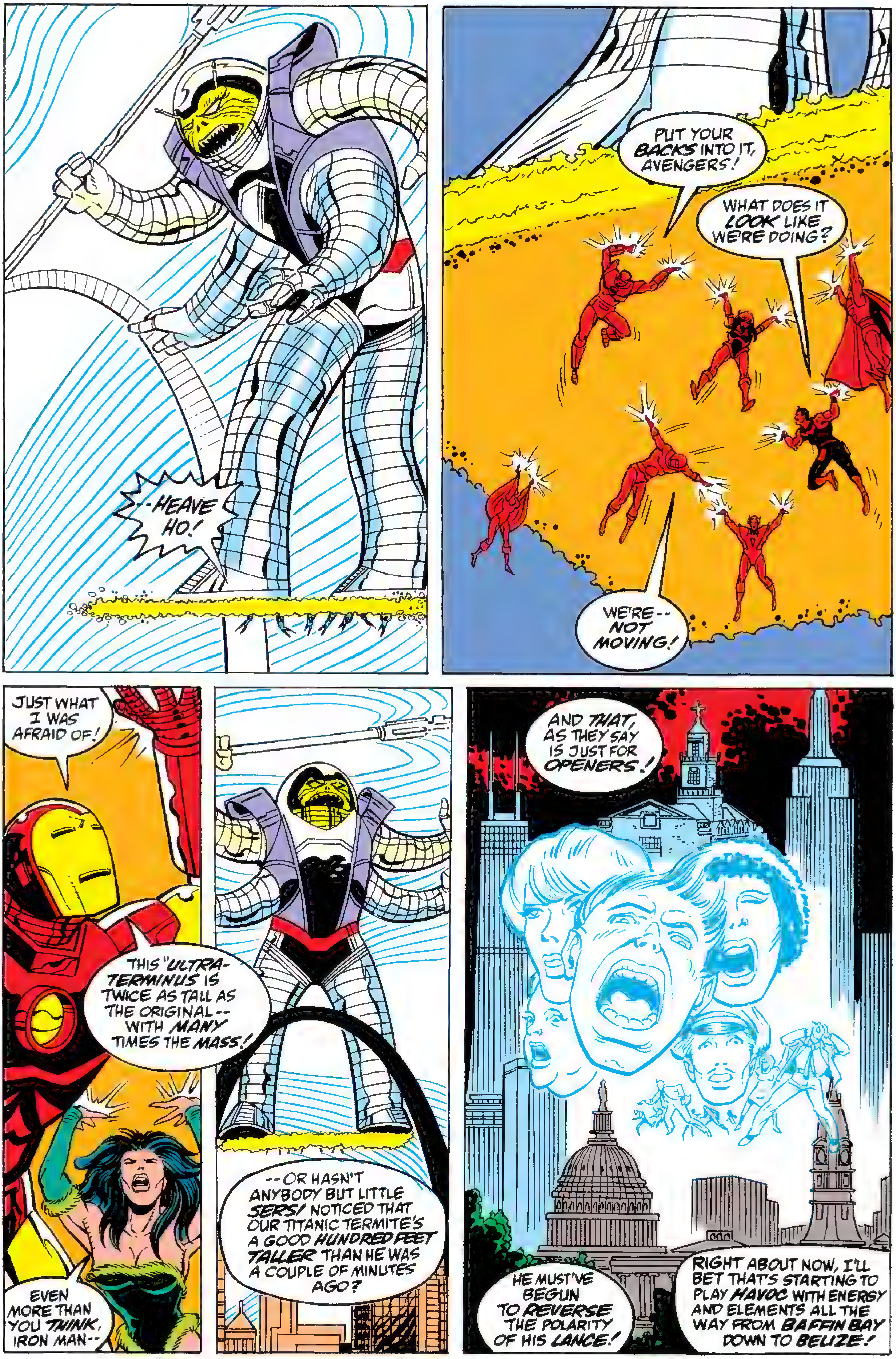

--DON'T YOU THINK WE'VE GOT MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO WORRY ABOUT, JUST NOW...
...LIKE MAYBE LITERALLY THE END OF THE EARTH?!
S-SORRY, GUYS.
IN THE IMMORTAL WORDS OF JOHN WAYNE--"SORRY DON'T GET IT DONE!"
SHAPE UP, GIRL!
HENRY PYM--DOST THOU STILL HOLD TO THINE EARLIER JUDGMENT OF TERMINUS' TRUE INTENT?
I STILL SUSPECT HIS LANCE MAY BE STARTING TO DRAIN THE WHOLE OF NORTH AMERICA, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU MEAN.
OF COURSE, AT THIS POINT, I CAN'T BE SURE...!
PERHAPS NOT...
...BUT I CAN.
AND MY COMPUTERIZED BRAIN FINDS YOUR EVALUATION TRAGICALLY ACCURATE. AT THIS MOMENT, TERMINUS' LANCE-RAYS ARE PROBING OUTWARD.
WHEN THEY REACH THEIR LIMITS, THEY WILL BEGIN TO SUCK IN ENERGY AND ELEMENTS FROM MANY MILES IN EVERY DIRECTION.
WELL! LOOKS LIKE THE GANG'S ALL HERE!
LET'S JUST PRAY THAT WE'VE GOT THE MUSCLE TO STOP HIM, SOMEHOW.
ALAS, FOR ALL MY FORMER BRAGGADOCCIO--IF ONLY VALIANT THOR WERE HERE, TO ADD HIS PROWESS TO OURS!
WE'VE GOT TO COME UP WITH SOME SORT OF PLAN...
UNFORTUNATELY, WASP, THERE IS NO TIME EVEN FOR THAT.
MY MENTAL CALCULATIONS ARE THAT TERMINUS' PROBE-RAYS WILL BEGIN TO REVERSE THEMSELVES, WITHIN SECONDS.
THUS, WE MUST STRIKE NOW--OR IT WILL BE TOO LATE!

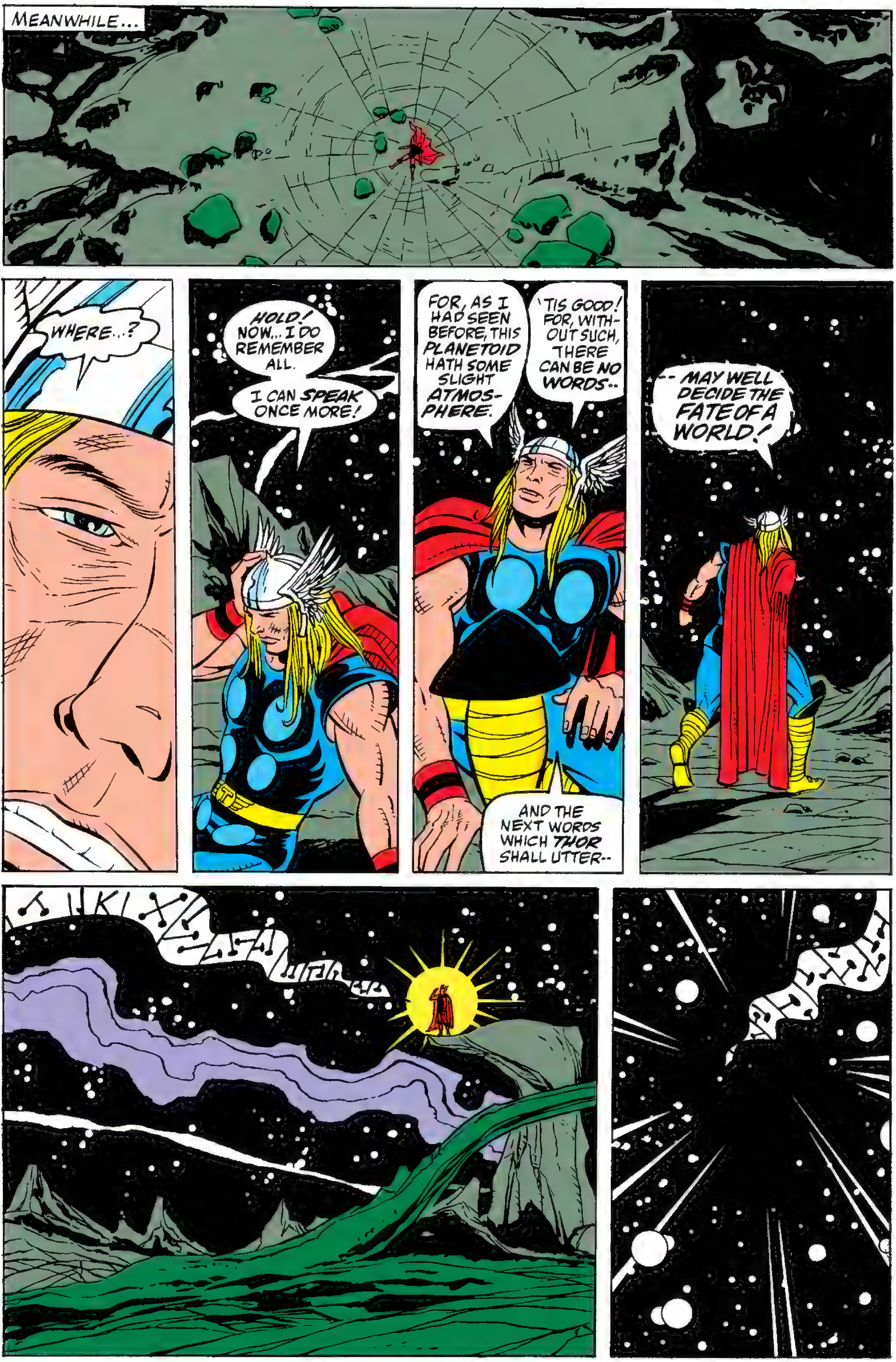

AVENGERS--
ATTACK!

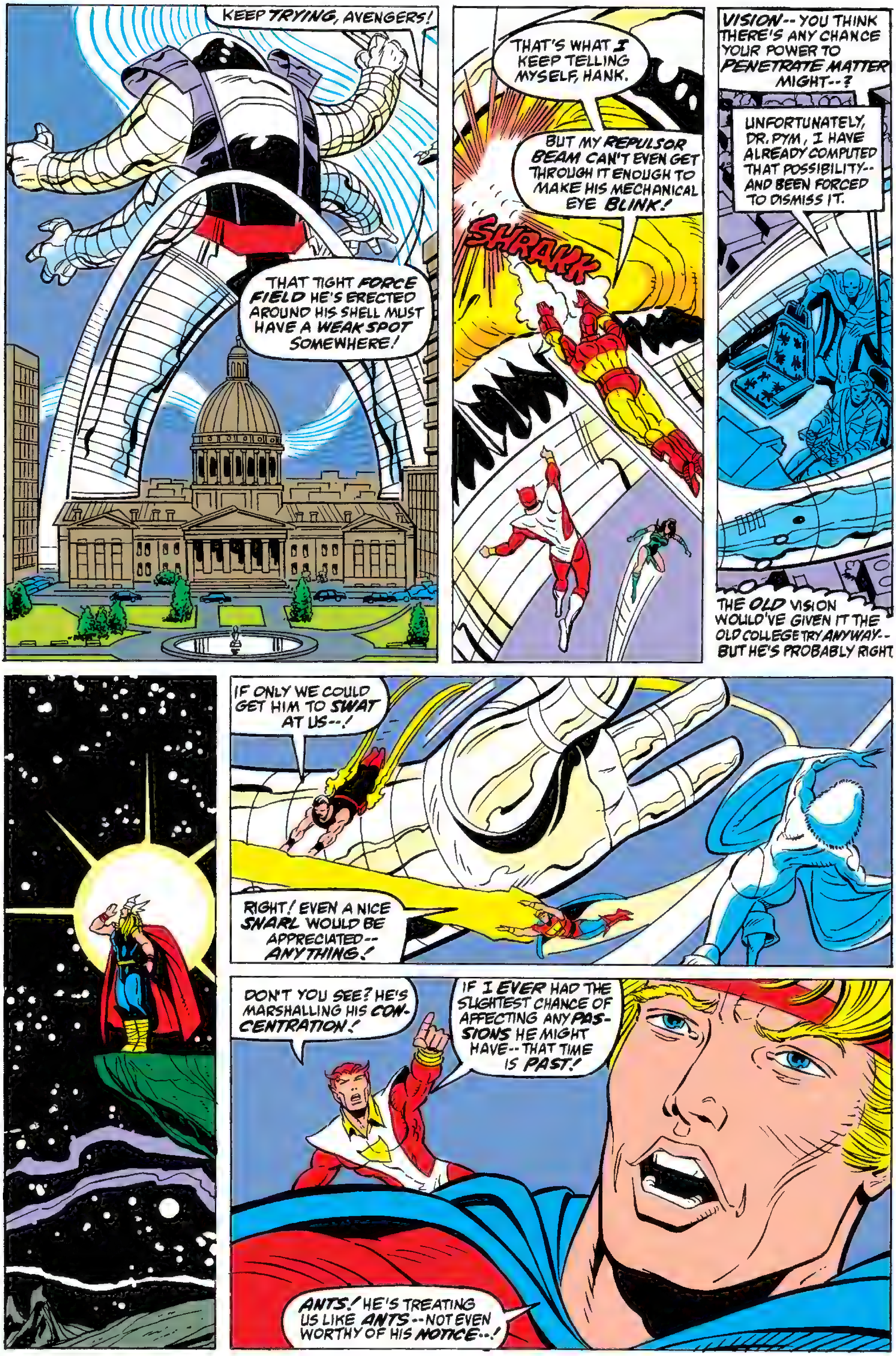

SPACE...
WHAT HAST THOU DONE, SON OF ODIN?
BUT--THOU KNOWEST FULL WELL, DOST THOU NOT?
IN SOOTH, THOU HAST GAMBLED THY WORLD'S VERY LIFE--
--AND IF THOU DOST LOSE THY GAMBLE, NOT ALL THE FOUNTAINS OF ETERNITY WILL WASH THE STAIN OF MURDEROUS GUILT FROM OFF THY HANDS!
BEFORE I WAS BOMBARDED BY KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUE ORIGINS OF TERMINUS*--
--WHILE I MERELY SUSPECTED THAT THE TERMINI HE HAD SPAWNED MIGHT PROVE A MENACE E'EN MORE FORMIDABLE THAN HE HAD BEEN--
--EVEN BEFORE I LEFT THE EARTH IN SEARCH OF TERMINUS--
--I DID PERFORM CERTAIN RITUALS.
NOW, BEREFT OF MINE HAMMER, I CAN NO SOONER CONTROL MY DRIFT THROUGH AIRLESS SPACE--THAN I CAN SPEAK HERE!
*SEE THOR ANNUAL, STILL ON SALE. --HOWARD
YET, EVEN AS TERMINUS DID EXPEL ME, AS MEN DO SPIT FORTH A GRAPE SEED--
--I STROVE MIGHTILY TO ARCH MY BODY--
--THAT I MIGHT PASS NEAR YON PLANETOID I HAD SPIED ERE CLOSING IN BATTLE WITH TERMINUS.
BUT IF I DO NOT COME NEAR ENOW FOR ITS MEAGRE GRAVITY TO GRASP ME--
--THEN ALL MY PLANNING HAS COME TO NAUGHT--AND THE EARTH IS SURELY DOOMED!
HOLD! THAT SENSATION I FEEL--
CAN IT BE--?
AYE! THE PLANETOID DOTH PULL ME TO ITS STONY BOSOM!
FASTER--E'ER FASTER DO I PLUMMET TOWARD--
THTOOOM!

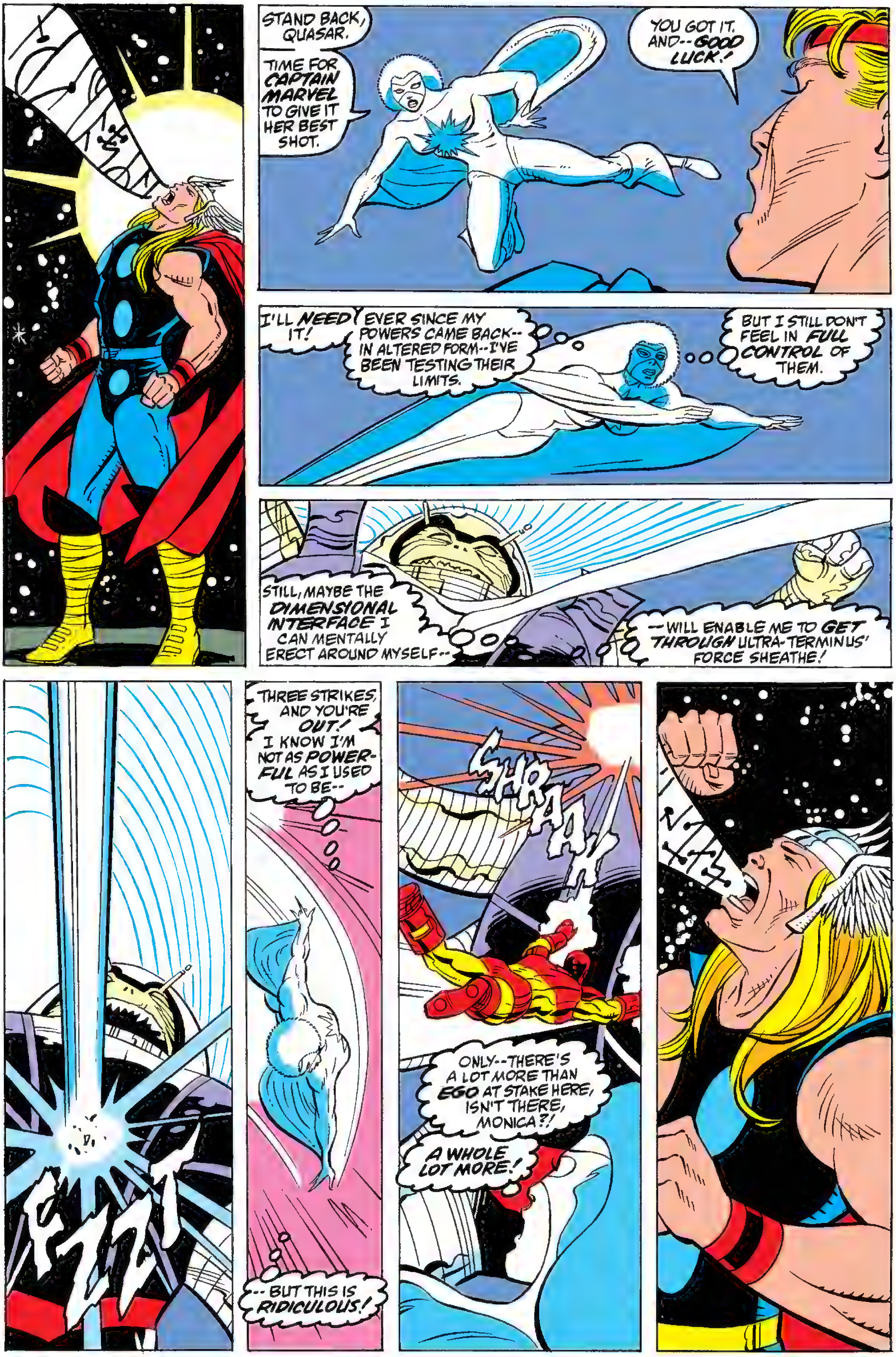

AT LAST WE'VE FORCED HIM TO KEEP SENDING HIS LANCE-RAYS **OUTWARD** A FEW MOMENTS LONGER -- --IF ONLY TO KEEP **US** AT BAY!
IF **TERMINUS** HAD BEEN THIS POWERFUL WHEN I LAST TACKLED HIM, I'D NEVER HAVE GOTTEN **NEAR** HIM!
IT'S-- **NOGO!**
BUT EVEN SO, THE RAW, UNREFINED **ENERGY** HE EXPENDS--
--MAY WELL **DESTROY** ST. LOUIS, DOWN TO ITS VERY **FOUNDATIONS!**
U.S. AGENT! CHASE EVERYBODY TO SAFETY-- HURRY!
WHETHER THOSE AVENGERS UPSTAIRS **WIN, LOSE**, OR **DRAW**-- THERE'LL BE TONS OF **DEBRIS** FALLING ALL OVER TOWN!
I DON'T MIND PLAYING **UMBRELLA**, C.A. --
--JUST DON'T TRY AND **ORDER ME AROUND**, OKAY?
ALL MY **STINGS** CAN HANDLE ARE SOME OF THE **SMALLER** CHUNKS THAT BREAK OFF BUILDINGS --
ZZAP
-- BUT, HEAVEN KNOWS, THERE ARE PLENTY OF **THOSE!**
YOU **HEARD** CAPTAIN AMERICA!
GET **OUT OF THIS AREA**--

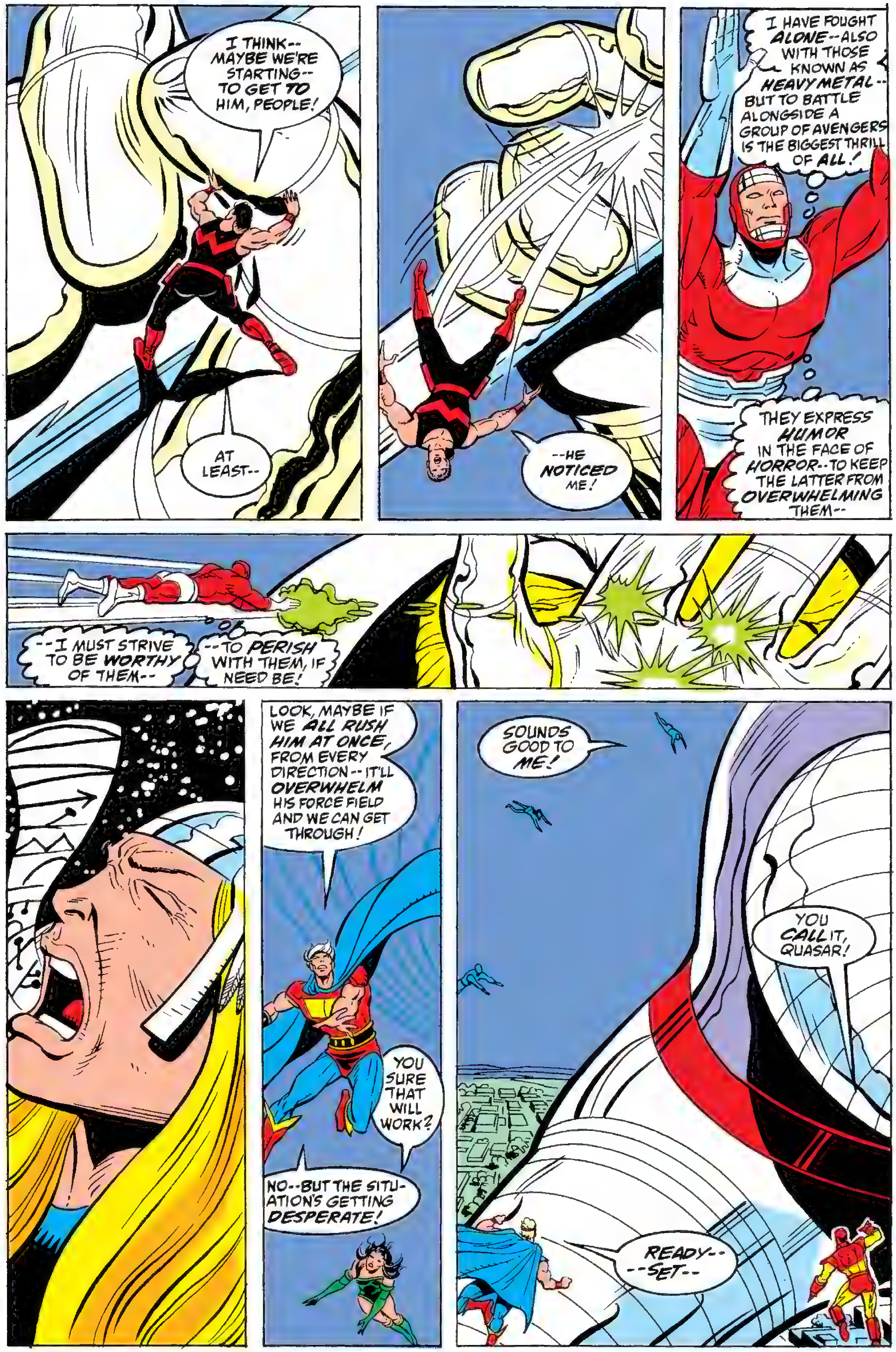

-- AND MAKE IT FAST!
ULP! YOU TALKED ME INTO IT!
I'VE NEVER FELT MORE HELPLESS, VISION.
CAP AND THE OTHERS-- IT'S LIKE THEY'RE HANDING OUT BANDAIDS TO THE VICTIMS OF A MISSILE ATTACK!
I AM SUPPOSED TO BE A BLOODLESS, SOULLESS ANDROID DR. PYM...
STILL, I SHARE YOUR COMPASSION FOR THE HAPLESS HUMANS ON WHOM THERE FALLS A VERITABLE RAIN OF CONCRETE.
AND IF OUR NEXT PLOY DOESN'T WORK, THINGS ARE GOING TO START HAPPENING ALL OVER THIS CONTINENT THAT'LL MAKE THIS LOOK LIKE A PICNIC!
YOU JOYBOYS CAN'T SMASH HIM--
I CAN'T TURN HIM INTO ANYTHING-- IT'S AS IF ONE OF THE CELESTIALS HAD WANDERED BACK TO EARTH, BOUND AND DETERMINED TO STAGE A RE-TRIAL!
MAYBE-- THE WAY I BEAT TERMINUS BEFORE--!
PARDON MY IGNORANCE, BUT-- YOU DEFEATED THE FIRST TERMINUS ALONE?
NOT EXACTLY-- BUT MY WRISTBANDS CREATED A HUGE ENERGY PLATFORM UNDER HIM--
--SO SPIDER-MAN AND I COULD LIFT HIM UP RIGHT INTO OUTER SPACE!
AND THE TWO OF YOU, TOGETHER, HAD THAT KIND OF POWER?
THAT WAS WHEN SPIDEY WAS COSMIC-POWERED FOR A FEW DAYS, REMEMBER?
EVEN SO, THE BUNCH OF US HAVE A LOT MORE MUSCLE THAN HE AND I COULD MUSTER, SO MAYBE--!
WELL, THE PLATFORM'S IN PLACE. LET'S GIVE 'ER THE OLD--

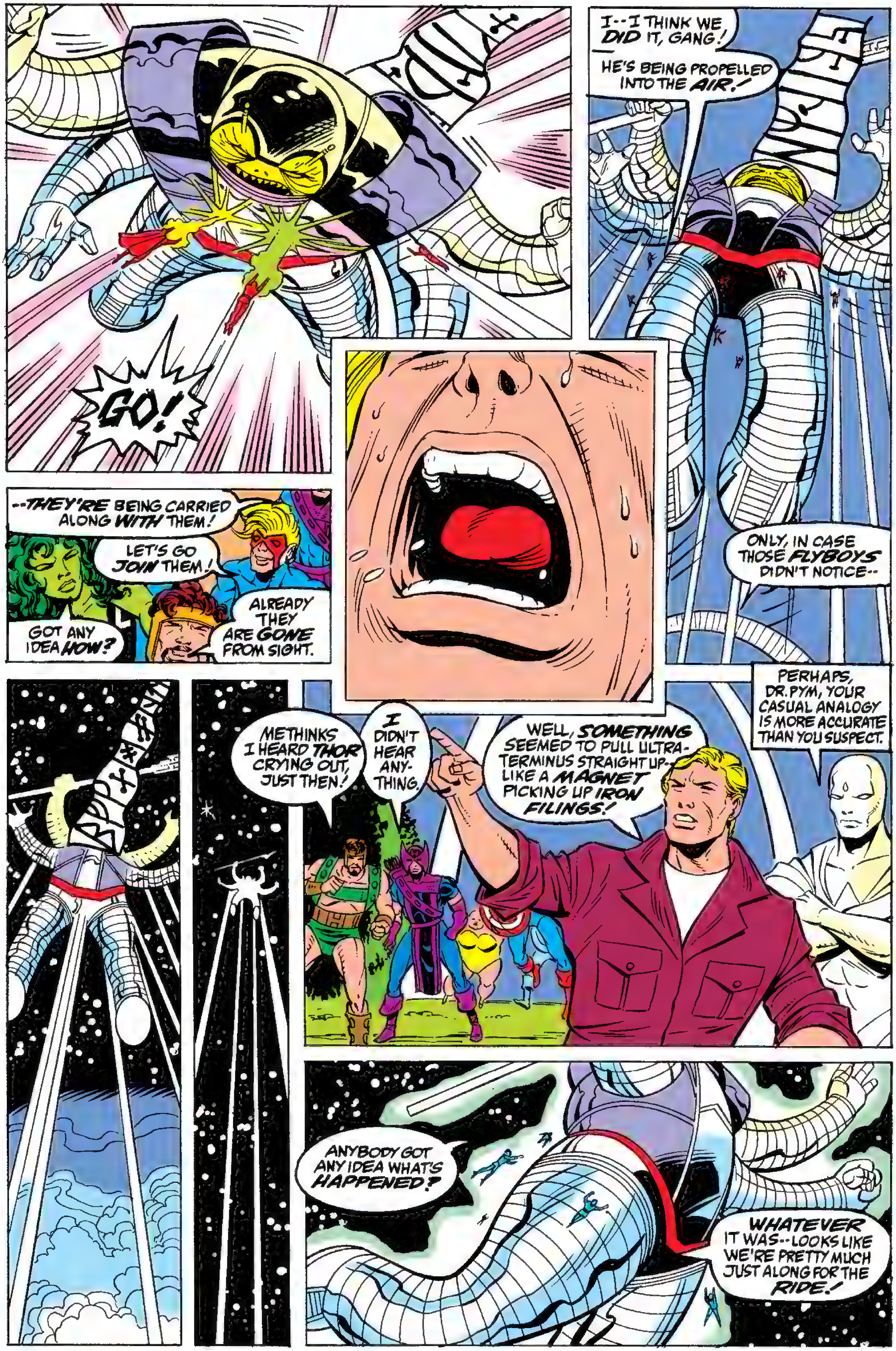

--HEAVE HO!
PUT YOUR BACKS INTO IT, AVENGERS!
WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE WE'RE DOING?
WE'RE--NOT MOVING!
JUST WHAT I WAS AFRAID OF!
THIS "ULTRA-TERMINUS" IS TWICE AS TALL AS THE ORIGINAL--WITH MANY TIMES THE MASS!
EVEN MORE THAN YOU THINK, IRON MAN--
--OR HASN'T ANYBODY BUT LITTLE SERSI NOTICED THAT OUR TITANIC TERMITE'S A GOOD HUNDRED FEET TALLER THAN HE WAS A COUPLE OF MINUTES AGO?
AND THAT, AS THEY SAY IS JUST FOR OPENERS!
HE MUST'VE BEGUN TO REVERSE THE POLARITY OF HIS LANCE!
RIGHT ABOUT NOW, I'LL BET THAT'S STARTING TO PLAY HAVOC WITH ENERGY AND ELEMENTS ALL THE WAY FROM BAFFIN BAY DOWN TO BELIZE!

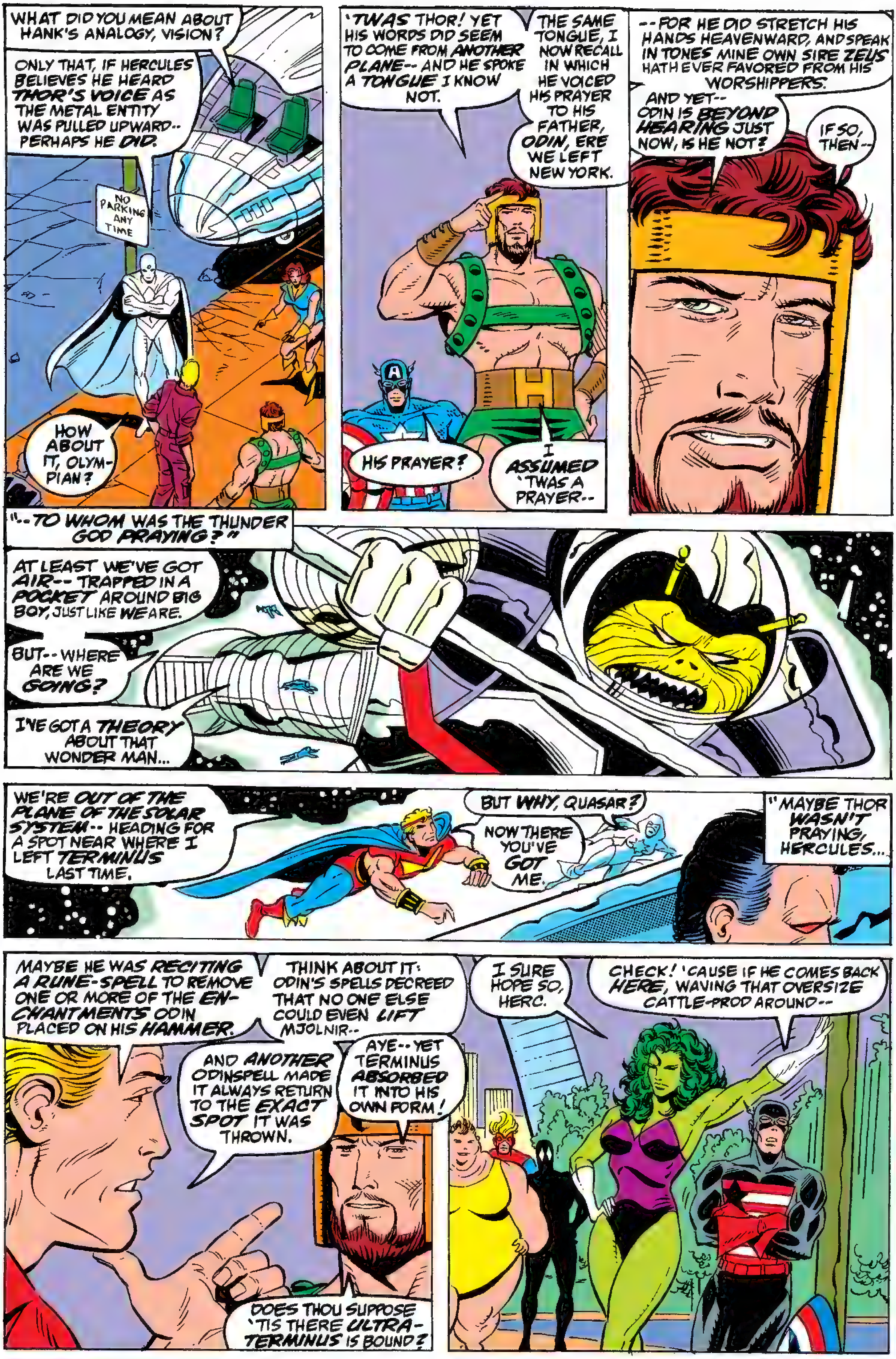

MEANWHILE...
WHERE...?
HOLD! NOW... I DO REMEMBER ALL.
I CAN SPEAK ONCE MORE!
FOR, AS I HAD SEEN BEFORE, THIS PLANETOID HATH SOME SLIGHT ATMOSPHERE.
'TIS GOOD! FOR, WITHOUT SUCH, THERE CAN BE NO WORDS--
AND THE NEXT WORDS WHICH THOR SHALL UTTER--
--MAY WELL DECIDE THE FATE OF A WORLD!

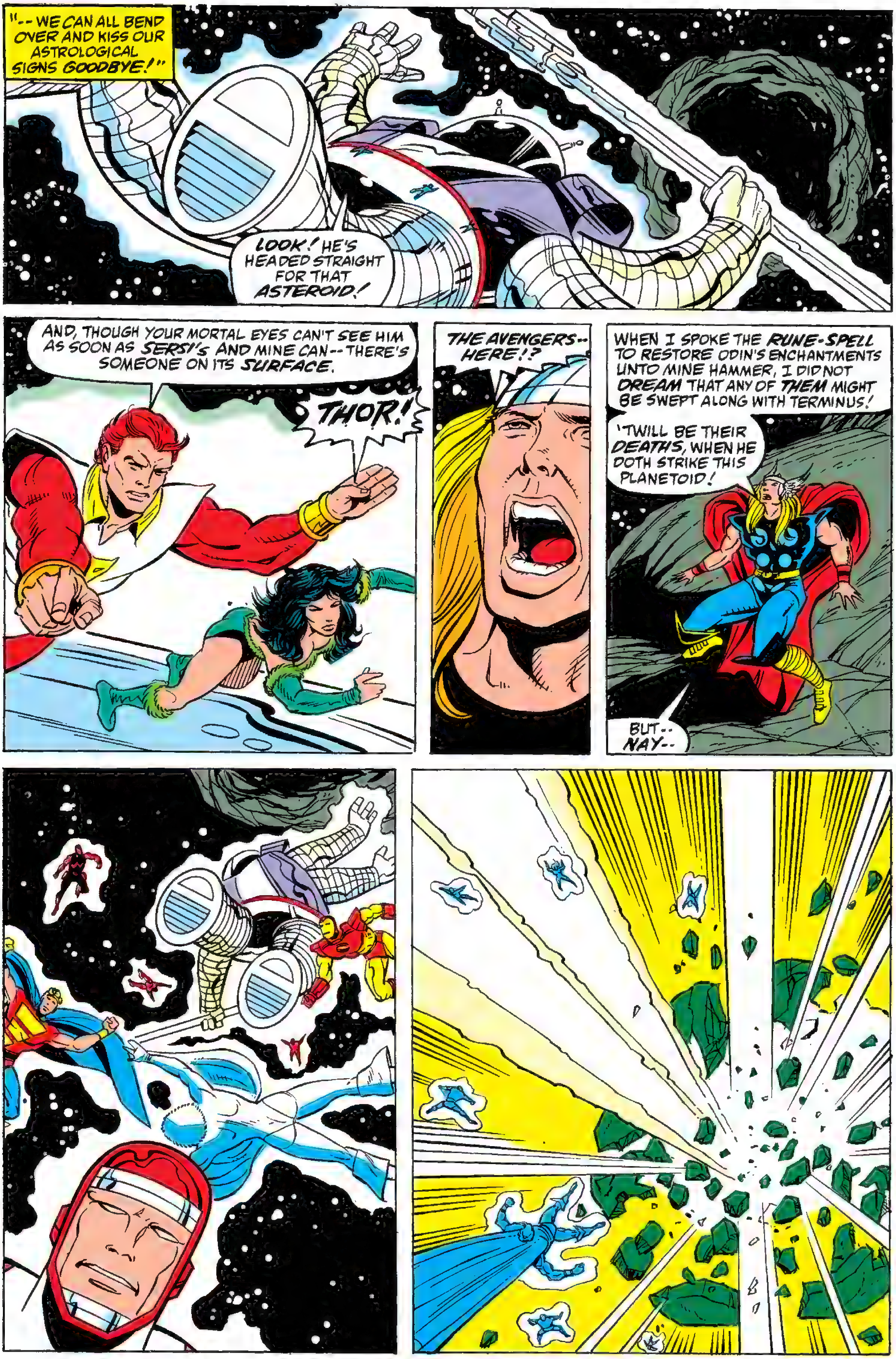

KEEP TRYING, AVENGERS!
THAT TIGHT FORCE FIELD HE'S ERECTED AROUND HIS SHELL MUST HAVE A WEAK SPOT SOMEWHERE!
THAT'S WHAT I KEEP TELLING MYSELF, HANK.
BUT MY REPULSOR BEAM CAN'T EVEN GET THROUGH IT ENOUGH TO MAKE HIS MECHANICAL EYE BLINK!
SHRAKK
VISION-- YOU THINK THERE'S ANY CHANCE YOUR POWER TO PENETRATE MATTER MIGHT--?
UNFORTUNATELY, DR. PYM, I HAVE ALREADY COMPUTED THAT POSSIBILITY-- AND BEEN FORCED TO DISMISS IT.
THE OLD VISION WOULD'VE GIVEN IT THE OLD COLLEGE TRY ANYWAY-- BUT HE'S PROBABLY RIGHT.
IF ONLY WE COULD GET HIM TO SWAT AT US--!
RIGHT! EVEN A NICE SNARL WOULD BE APPRECIATED-- ANYTHING!
DON'T YOU SEE? HE'S MARSHALLING HIS CONCENTRATION!
IF I EVER HAD THE SLIGHTEST CHANCE OF AFFECTING ANY PASSIONS HE MIGHT HAVE-- THAT TIME IS PAST!
ANTS! HE'S TREATING US LIKE ANTS-- NOT EVEN WORTHY OF HIS NOTICE--!

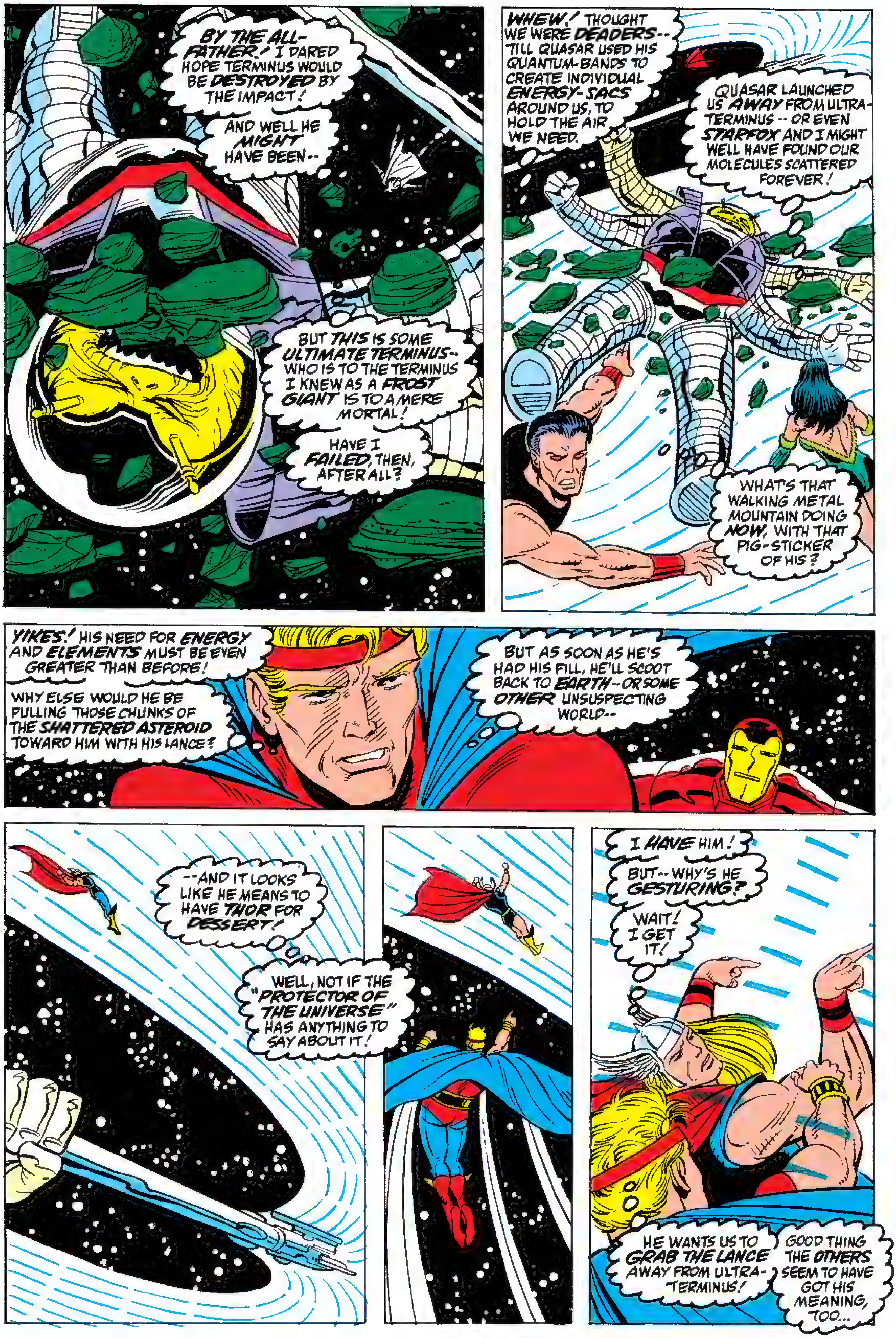

STAND BACK, QUASAR.
TIME FOR CAPTAIN MARVEL TO GIVE IT HER BEST SHOT.
YOU GOT IT. AND--GOOD LUCK!
I'LL NEED IT!
EVER SINCE MY POWERS CAME BACK--IN ALTERED FORM--I'VE BEEN TESTING THEIR LIMITS.
BUT I STILL DON'T FEEL IN FULL CONTROL OF THEM.
STILL, MAYBE THE DIMENSIONAL INTERFACE I CAN MENTALLY ERECT AROUND MYSELF--
--WILL ENABLE ME TO GET THROUGH ULTRA-TERMINUS' FORCE SHEATHE!
FZZT
THREE STRIKES, AND YOU'RE OUT! I KNOW I'M NOT AS POWERFUL AS I USED TO BE--
--BUT THIS IS RIDICULOUS!
SHRAAK
ONLY--THERE'S A LOT MORE THAN EGO AT STAKE HERE, ISN'T THERE, MONICA?!
A WHOLE LOT MORE!

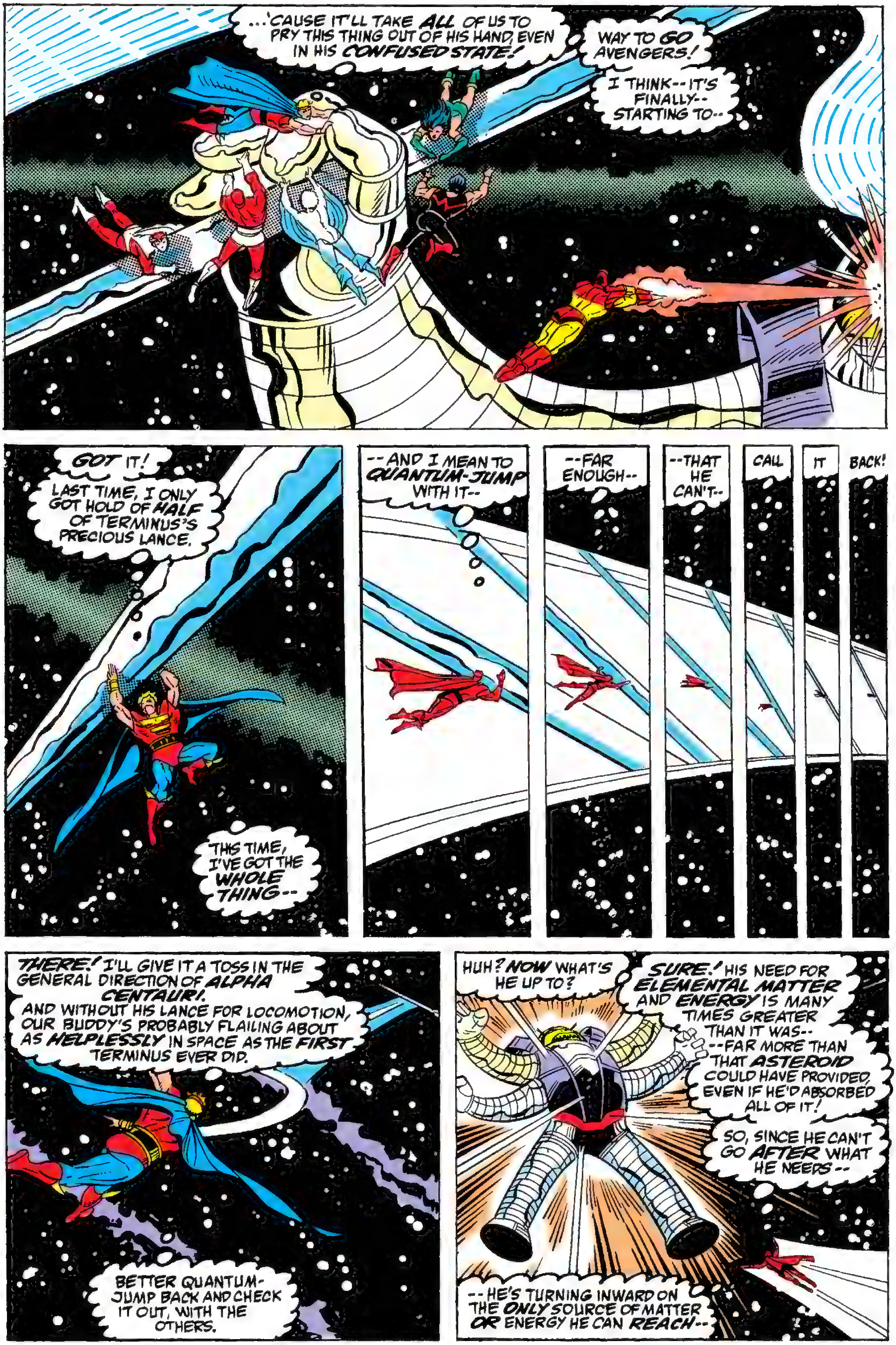

I THINK-- MAYBE WE'RE STARTING-- TO GET *TO* HIM, PEOPLE!
AT LEAST--
--HE *NOTICED* ME!
I HAVE FOUGHT *ALONE*--ALSO WITH THOSE KNOWN AS *HEAVY METAL*--BUT TO BATTLE ALONGSIDE A GROUP OF AVENGERS IS THE BIGGEST THRILL OF *ALL!*
THEY EXPRESS *HUMOR* IN THE FACE OF *HORROR*--TO KEEP THE LATTER FROM *OVERWHELMING* THEM--
--I MUST STRIVE TO BE *WORTHY* OF THEM--
--TO *PERISH* WITH THEM, IF NEED BE!
LOOK, MAYBE IF WE *ALL RUSH HIM AT ONCE*, FROM EVERY DIRECTION--IT'LL *OVERWHELM* HIS FORCE FIELD AND WE CAN GET THROUGH!
YOU SURE THAT WILL WORK?
NO--BUT THE SITUATION'S GETTING *DESPERATE!*
SOUNDS GOOD TO *ME!*
YOU *CALL* IT, QUASAR!
READY-- --SET--

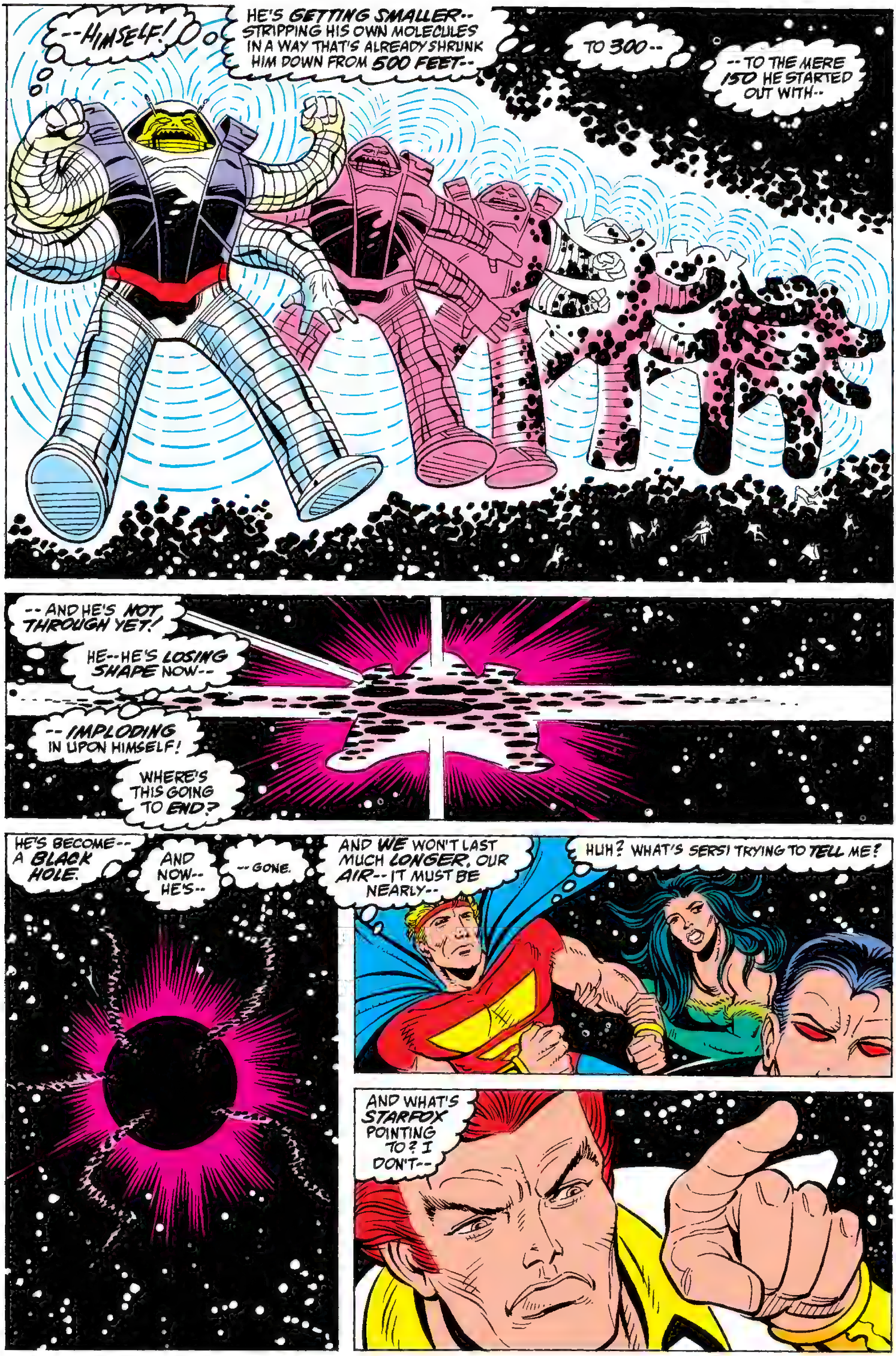

GO!
I--I THINK WE DID IT, GANG!
HE'S BEING PROPELLED INTO THE AIR!
--THEY'RE BEING CARRIED ALONG WITH THEM!
LET'S GO JOIN THEM!
GOT ANY IDEA HOW?
ALREADY THEY ARE GONE FROM SIGHT.
ONLY, IN CASE THOSE FLYBOYS DIDN'T NOTICE--
METHINKS I HEARD THOR CRYING OUT, JUST THEN!
I DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING.
WELL, SOMETHING SEEMED TO PULL ULTRA-TERMINUS STRAIGHT UP--LIKE A MAGNET PICKING UP IRON FILINGS!
PERHAPS, DR. PYM, YOUR CASUAL ANALOGY IS MORE ACCURATE THAN YOU SUSPECT.
ANYBODY GOT ANY IDEA WHAT'S HAPPENED?
WHATEVER IT WAS--LOOKS LIKE WE'RE PRETTY MUCH JUST ALONG FOR THE RIDE!

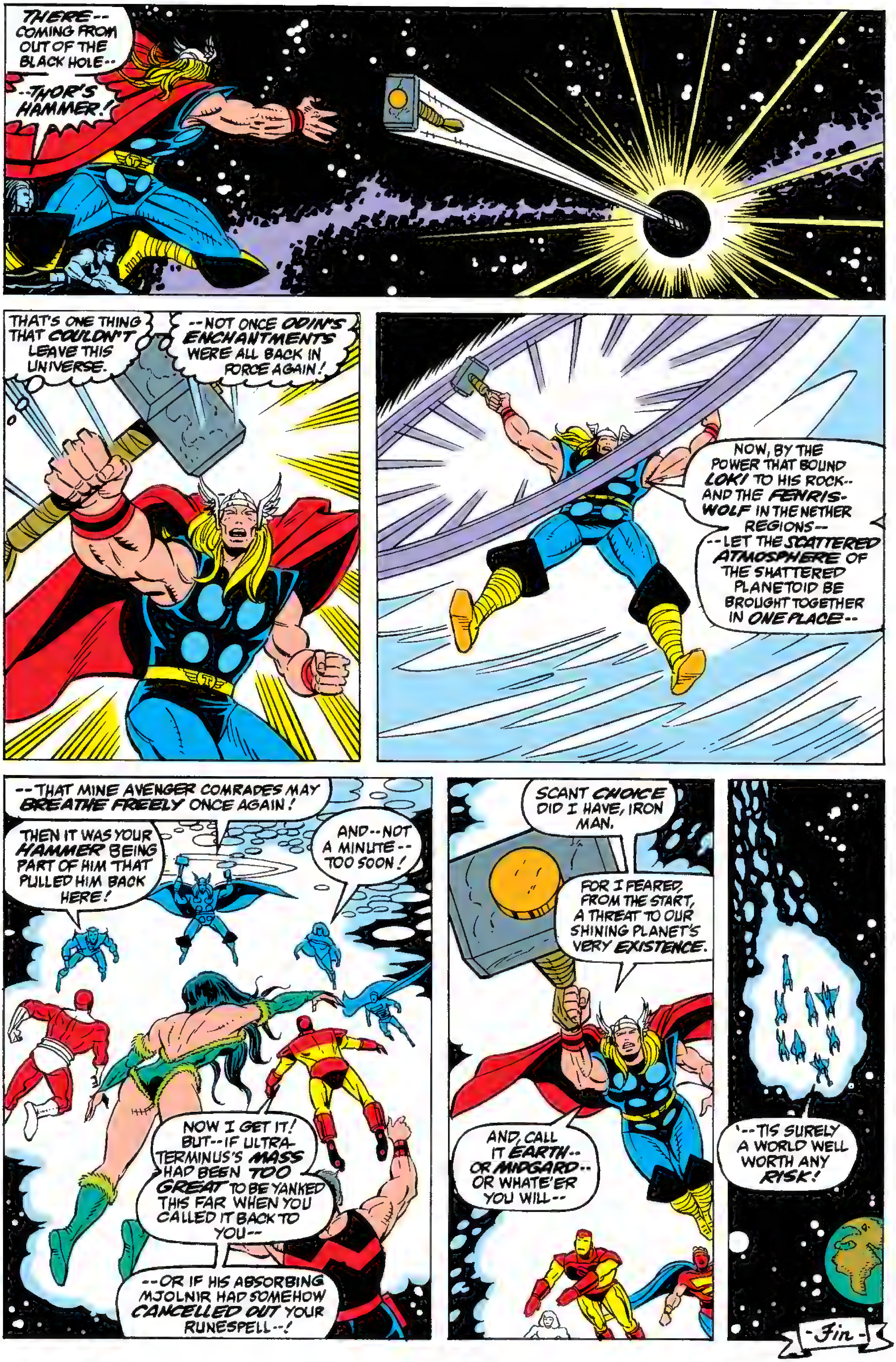

WHAT DID YOU MEAN ABOUT HANK'S ANALOGY, VISION?
ONLY THAT, IF HERCULES BELIEVES HE HEARD THOR'S VOICE AS THE METAL ENTITY WAS PULLED UPWARD-- PERHAPS HE DID.
NO PARKING ANY TIME
HOW ABOUT IT, OLYMPIAN?
'TWAS THOR! YET HIS WORDS DID SEEM TO COME FROM ANOTHER PLANE-- AND HE SPOKE A TONGUE I KNOW NOT.
THE SAME TONGUE, I NOW RECALL IN WHICH HE VOICED HIS PRAYER TO HIS FATHER, ODIN, ERE WE LEFT NEW YORK.
HIS PRAYER?
I ASSUMED 'TWAS A PRAYER--
--FOR HE DID STRETCH HIS HANDS HEAVENWARD, AND SPEAK IN TONES MINE OWN SIRE ZEUS HATH EVER FAVORED FROM HIS WORSHIPPERS.
AND YET-- ODIN IS BEYOND HEARING JUST NOW, IS HE NOT?
IF SO, THEN--
"--TO WHOM WAS THE THUNDER GOD PRAYING?"
AT LEAST WE'VE GOT AIR-- TRAPPED IN A POCKET AROUND BIG BOY, JUST LIKE WE ARE.
BUT-- WHERE ARE WE GOING?
I'VE GOT A THEORY ABOUT THAT WONDER MAN...
WE'RE OUT OF THE PLANE OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM-- HEADING FOR A SPOT NEAR WHERE I LEFT TERMINUS LAST TIME.
BUT WHY, QUASAR?
NOW THERE YOU'VE GOT ME.
"MAYBE THOR WASN'T PRAYING, HERCULES...
MAYBE HE WAS RECITING A RUNE-SPELL TO REMOVE ONE OR MORE OF THE ENCHANTMENTS ODIN PLACED ON HIS HAMMER.
THINK ABOUT IT: ODIN'S SPELLS DECREED THAT NO ONE ELSE COULD EVEN LIFT MJOLNIR--
AND ANOTHER ODINSPELL MADE IT ALWAYS RETURN TO THE EXACT SPOT IT WAS THROWN.
AYE-- YET TERMINUS ABSORBED IT INTO HIS OWN FORM!
DOES THOU SUPPOSE 'TIS THERE ULTRA-TERMINUS IS BOUND?
I SURE HOPE SO, HERC.
CHECK! 'CAUSE IF HE COMES BACK HERE, WAVING THAT OVERSIZE CATTLE-PROD AROUND--


"-- WE CAN ALL BEND OVER AND KISS OUR ASTROLOGICAL SIGNS GOODBYE!"
LOOK! HE'S HEADED STRAIGHT FOR THAT ASTEROID!
AND, THOUGH YOUR MORTAL EYES CAN'T SEE HIM AS SOON AS SERSI'S AND MINE CAN -- THERE'S SOMEONE ON ITS SURFACE.
THOR!
THE AVENGERS -- HERE!?
WHEN I SPOKE THE RUNE-SPELL TO RESTORE ODIN'S ENCHANTMENTS UNTO MINE HAMMER, I DID NOT DREAM THAT ANY OF THEM MIGHT BE SWEPT ALONG WITH TERMINUS!
'TWILL BE THEIR DEATHS, WHEN HE DOTH STRIKE THIS PLANETOID!
BUT -- NAY --

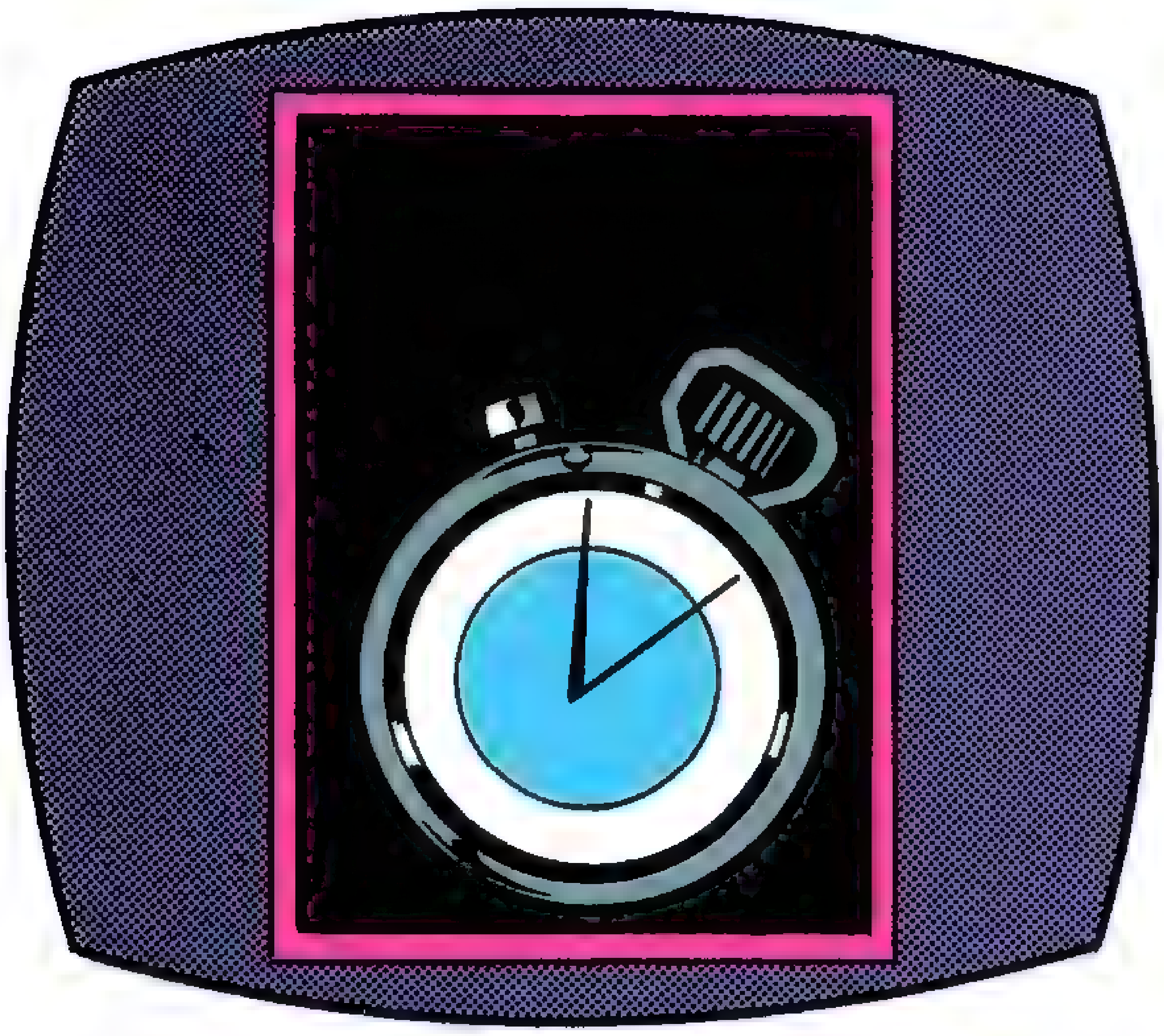

BY THE ALL-FATHER! I DARED HOPE TERMINUS WOULD BE DESTROYED BY THE IMPACT!
AND WELL HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN--
BUT THIS IS SOME ULTIMATE TERMINUS-- WHO IS TO THE TERMINUS I KNEW AS A FROST GIANT IS TO A MERE MORTAL!
HAVE I FAILED, THEN, AFTER ALL?
WHEW! THOUGHT WE WERE DEADERS-- TILL QUASAR USED HIS QUANTUM-BANDS TO CREATE INDIVIDUAL ENERGY-SACS AROUND US, TO HOLD THE AIR WE NEED.
QUASAR LAUNCHED US AWAY FROM ULTRA-TERMINUS -- OR EVEN STARFOX AND I MIGHT WELL HAVE FOUND OUR MOLECULES SCATTERED FOREVER!
WHAT'S THAT WALKING METAL MOUNTAIN DOING NOW, WITH THAT PIG-STICKER OF HIS?
YIKES! HIS NEED FOR ENERGY AND ELEMENTS MUST BE EVEN GREATER THAN BEFORE!
WHY ELSE WOULD HE BE PULLING THOSE CHUNKS OF THE SHATTERED ASTEROID TOWARD HIM WITH HIS LANCE?
BUT AS SOON AS HE'S HAD HIS FILL, HE'LL SCOOT BACK TO EARTH--OR SOME OTHER UNSUSPECTING WORLD--
--AND IT LOOKS LIKE HE MEANS TO HAVE THOR FOR DESSERT!
WELL, NOT IF THE "PROTECTOR OF THE UNIVERSE" HAS ANYTHING TO SAY ABOUT IT!
I HAVE HIM!
BUT--WHY'S HE GESTURING?
WAIT! I GET IT!
HE WANTS US TO GRAB THE LANCE AWAY FROM ULTRA-TERMINUS!
GOOD THING THE OTHERS SEEM TO HAVE GOT HIS MEANING, TOO...


...'CAUSE IT'LL TAKE ALL OF US TO PRY THIS THING OUT OF HIS HAND, EVEN IN HIS CONFUSED STATE!
WAY TO GO AVENGERS!
I THINK--IT'S FINALLY--STARTING TO--
GOT IT!
LAST TIME, I ONLY GOT HOLD OF HALF OF TERMINUS'S PRECIOUS LANCE.
THIS TIME, I'VE GOT THE WHOLE THING--
--AND I MEAN TO QUANTUM-JUMP WITH IT--
--FAR ENOUGH--
--THAT HE CAN'T--
CALL
IT
BACK!
THERE! I'LL GIVE IT A TOSS IN THE GENERAL DIRECTION OF ALPHA CENTAURI!
AND WITHOUT HIS LANCE FOR LOCOMOTION, OUR BUDDY'S PROBABLY FLAILING ABOUT AS HELPLESSLY IN SPACE AS THE FIRST TERMINUS EVER DID.
BETTER QUANTUM-JUMP BACK AND CHECK IT OUT, WITH THE OTHERS.
HUH? NOW WHAT'S HE UP TO?
SURE! HIS NEED FOR ELEMENTAL MATTER AND ENERGY IS MANY TIMES GREATER THAN IT WAS--
--FAR MORE THAN THAT ASTEROID COULD HAVE PROVIDED, EVEN IF HE'D ABSORBED ALL OF IT!
SO, SINCE HE CAN'T GO AFTER WHAT HE NEEDS--
--HE'S TURNING INWARD ON THE ONLY SOURCE OF MATTER OR ENERGY HE CAN REACH--


--HIMSELF!
HE'S GETTING SMALLER-- STRIPPING HIS OWN MOLECULES IN A WAY THAT'S ALREADY SHRUNK HIM DOWN FROM 500 FEET--
TO 300--
--TO THE MERE 150 HE STARTED OUT WITH--
--AND HE'S NOT THROUGH YET!
HE--HE'S LOSING SHAPE NOW--
--IMPLODING IN UPON HIMSELF!
WHERE'S THIS GOING TO END?
HE'S BECOME--A BLACK HOLE.
AND NOW--HE'S--
--GONE.
AND WE WON'T LAST MUCH LONGER. OUR AIR--IT MUST BE NEARLY--
HUH? WHAT'S SERSI TRYING TO TELL ME?
AND WHAT'S STARFOX POINTING TO? I DON'T--


THERE--COMING FROM OUT OF THE BLACK HOLE--
--THOR'S HAMMER!
THAT'S ONE THING THAT COULDN'T LEAVE THIS UNIVERSE.
--NOT ONCE ODIN'S ENCHANTMENTS WERE ALL BACK IN FORCE AGAIN!
NOW, BY THE POWER THAT BOUND LOKI TO HIS ROCK--AND THE FENRIS-WOLF IN THE NETHER REGIONS--
--LET THE SCATTERED ATMOSPHERE OF THE SHATTERED PLANETOID BE BROUGHT TOGETHER IN ONE PLACE--
--THAT MINE AVENGER COMRADES MAY BREATHE FREELY ONCE AGAIN!
THEN IT WAS YOUR HAMMER BEING PART OF HIM THAT PULLED HIM BACK HERE!
AND--NOT A MINUTE--TOO SOON!
NOW I GET IT! BUT--IF ULTRA-TERMINUS'S MASS HAD BEEN TOO GREAT TO BE YANKED THIS FAR WHEN YOU CALLED IT BACK TO YOU--
--OR IF HIS ABSORBING MJOLNIR HAD SOMEHOW CANCELLED OUT YOUR RUNESPELL--!
SCANT CHOICE DID I HAVE, IRON MAN.
FOR I FEARED, FROM THE START, A THREAT TO OUR SHINING PLANET'S VERY EXISTENCE.
AND, CALL IT EARTH--OR MIDGARD--OR WHATE'ER YOU WILL--
'--TIS SURELY A WORLD WELL WORTH ANY RISK!
-Fin-

MEDIA WATCH


TIK TIK
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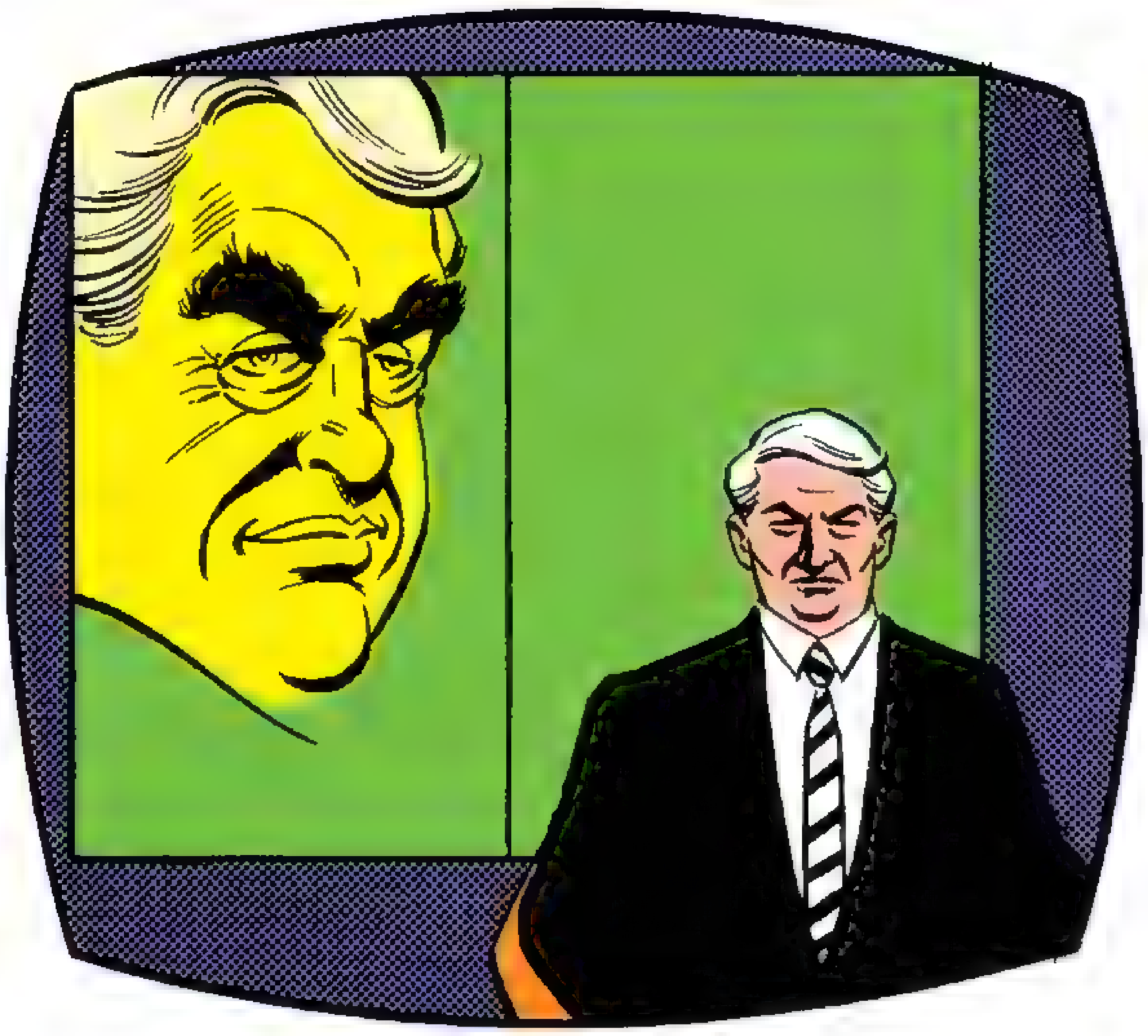
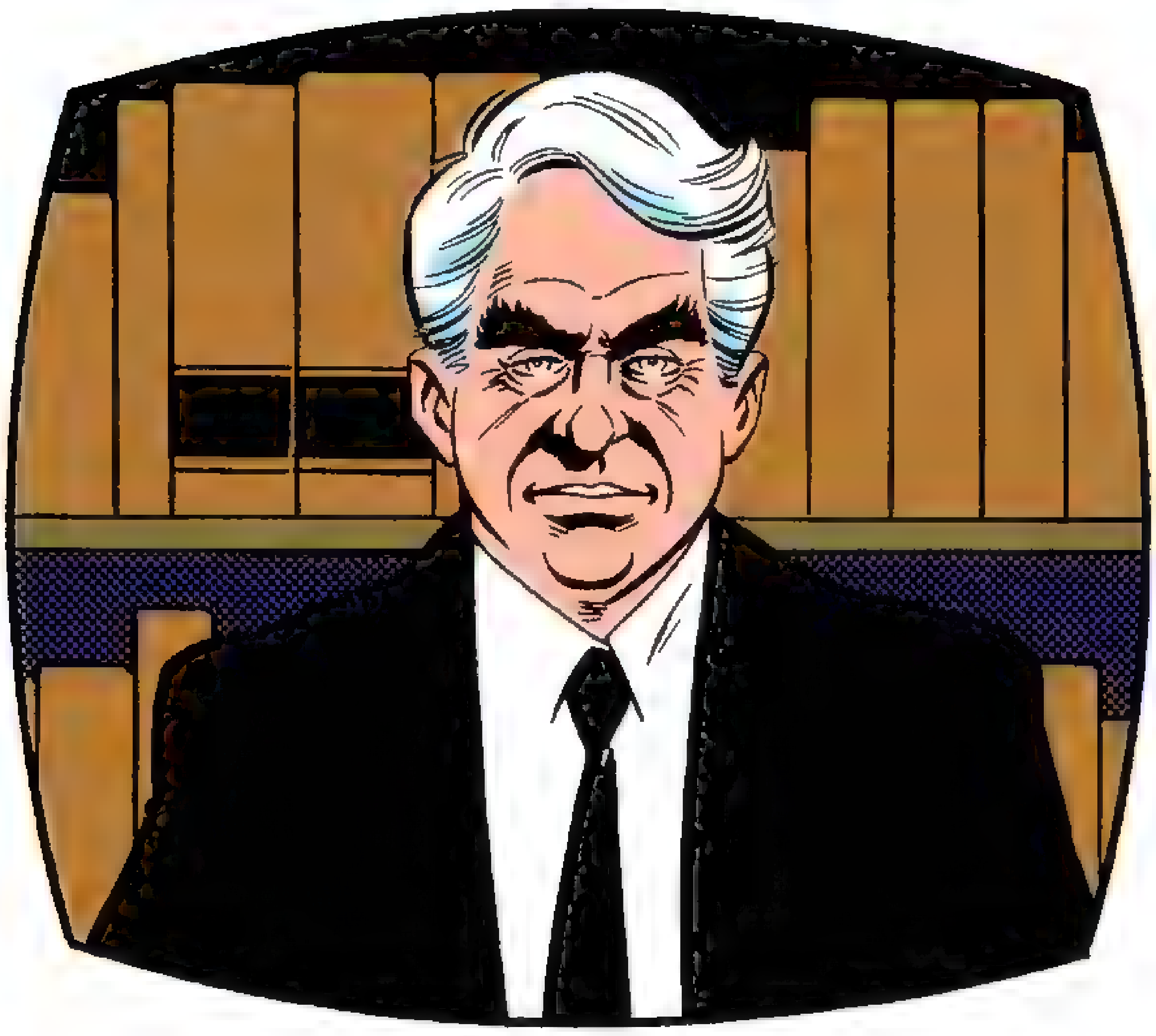
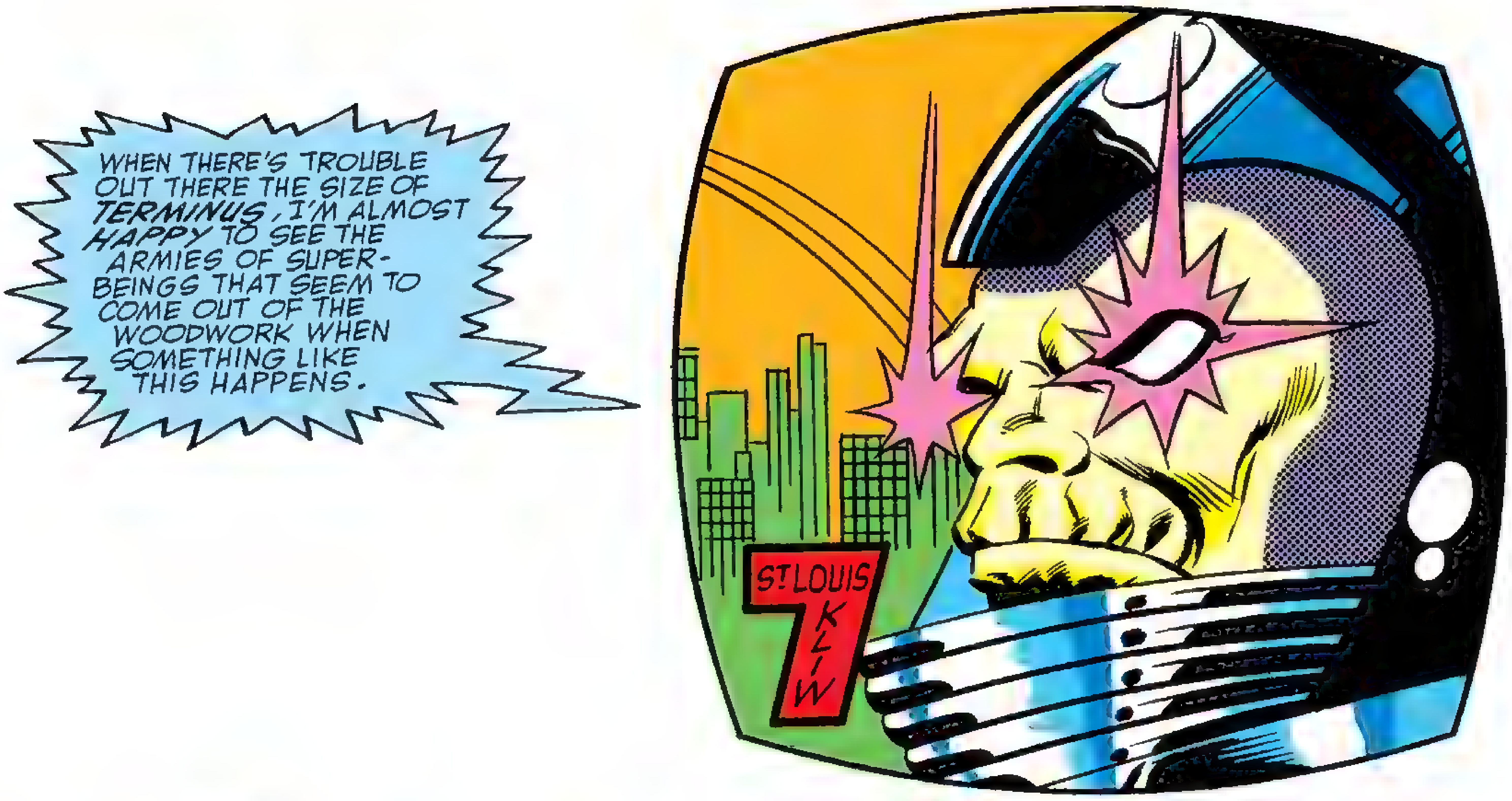
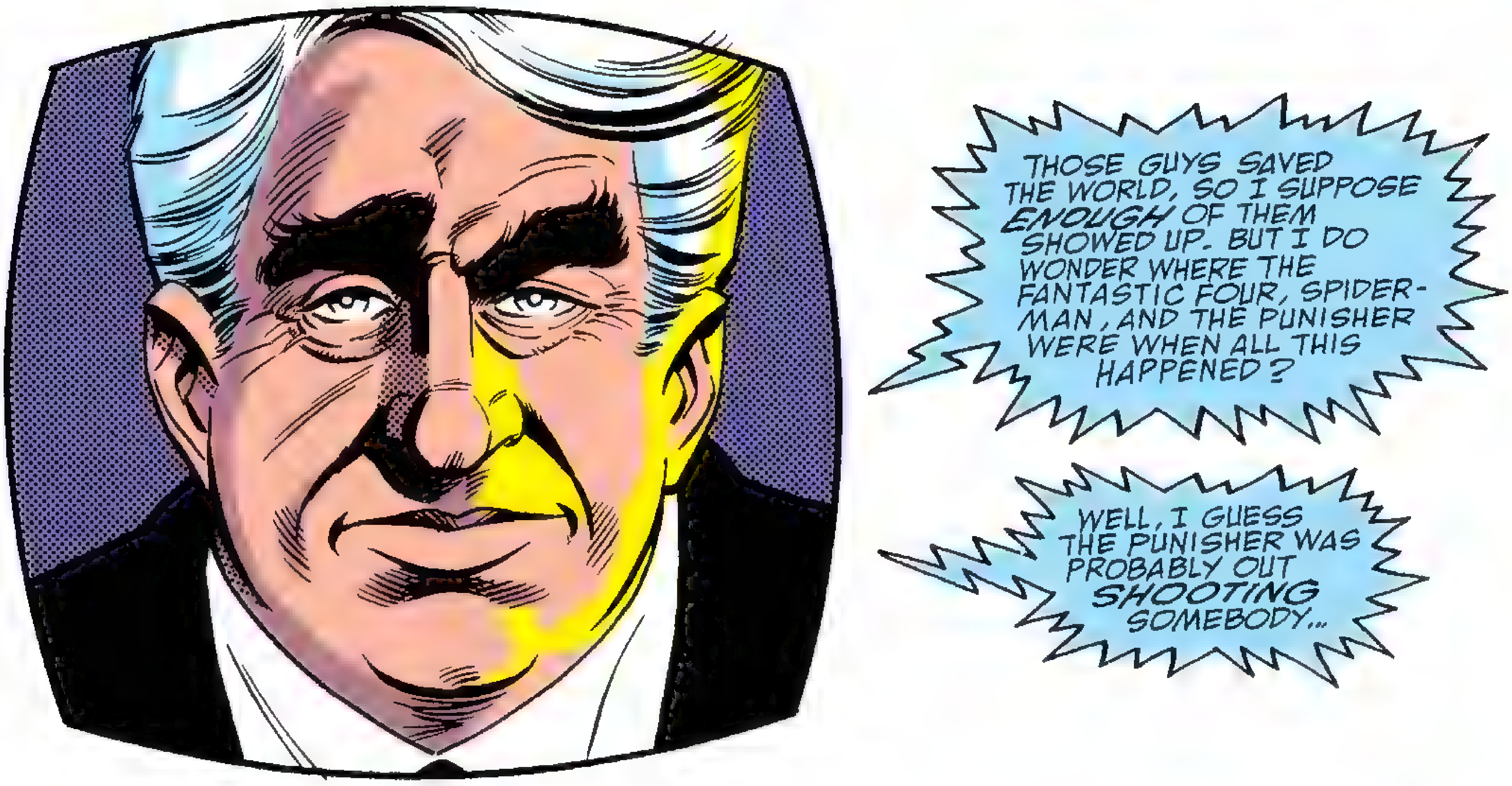
TIK

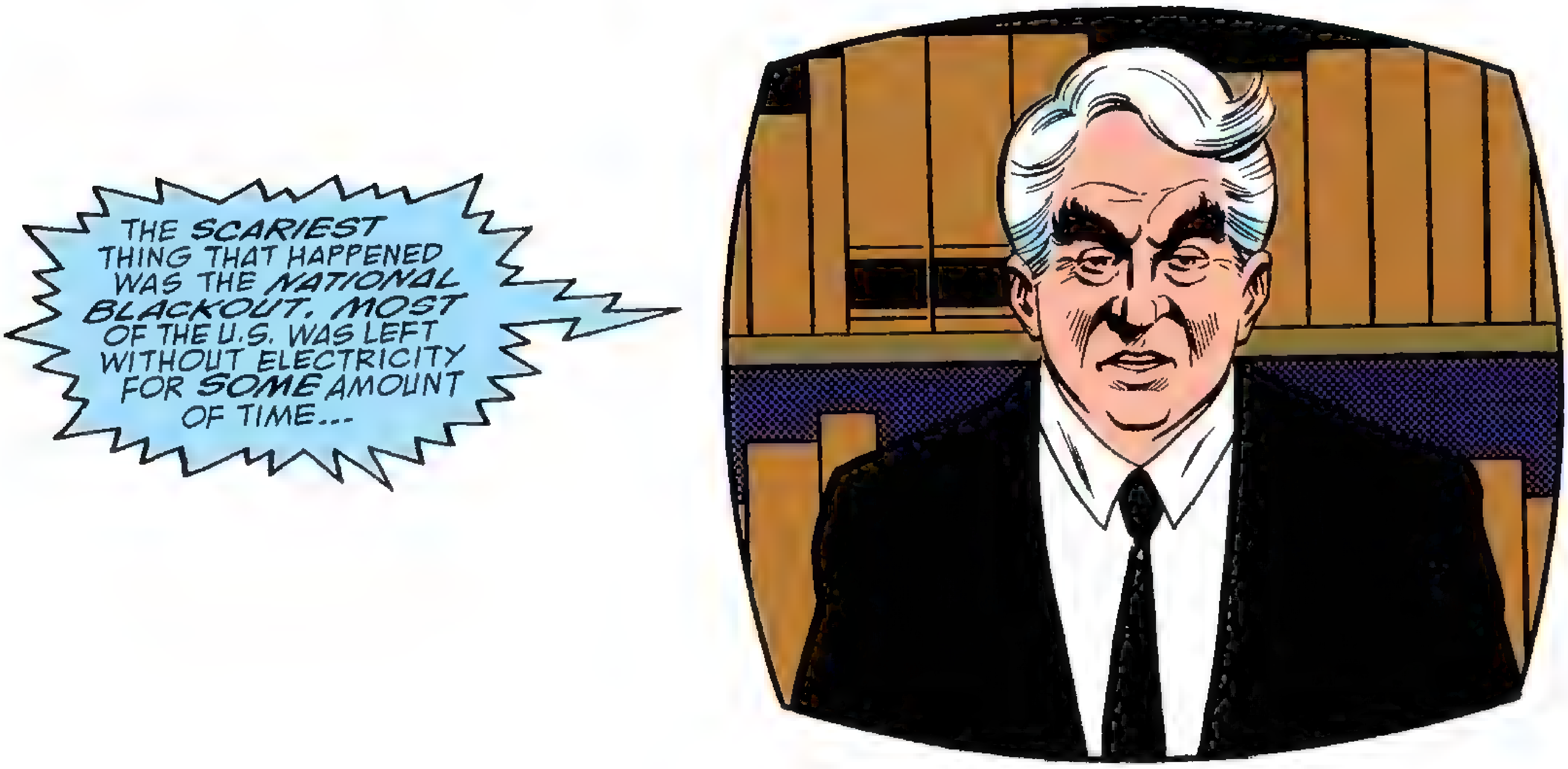

AND NOW...
"A FEW MINUTES WITH ANDY ROONEY..."

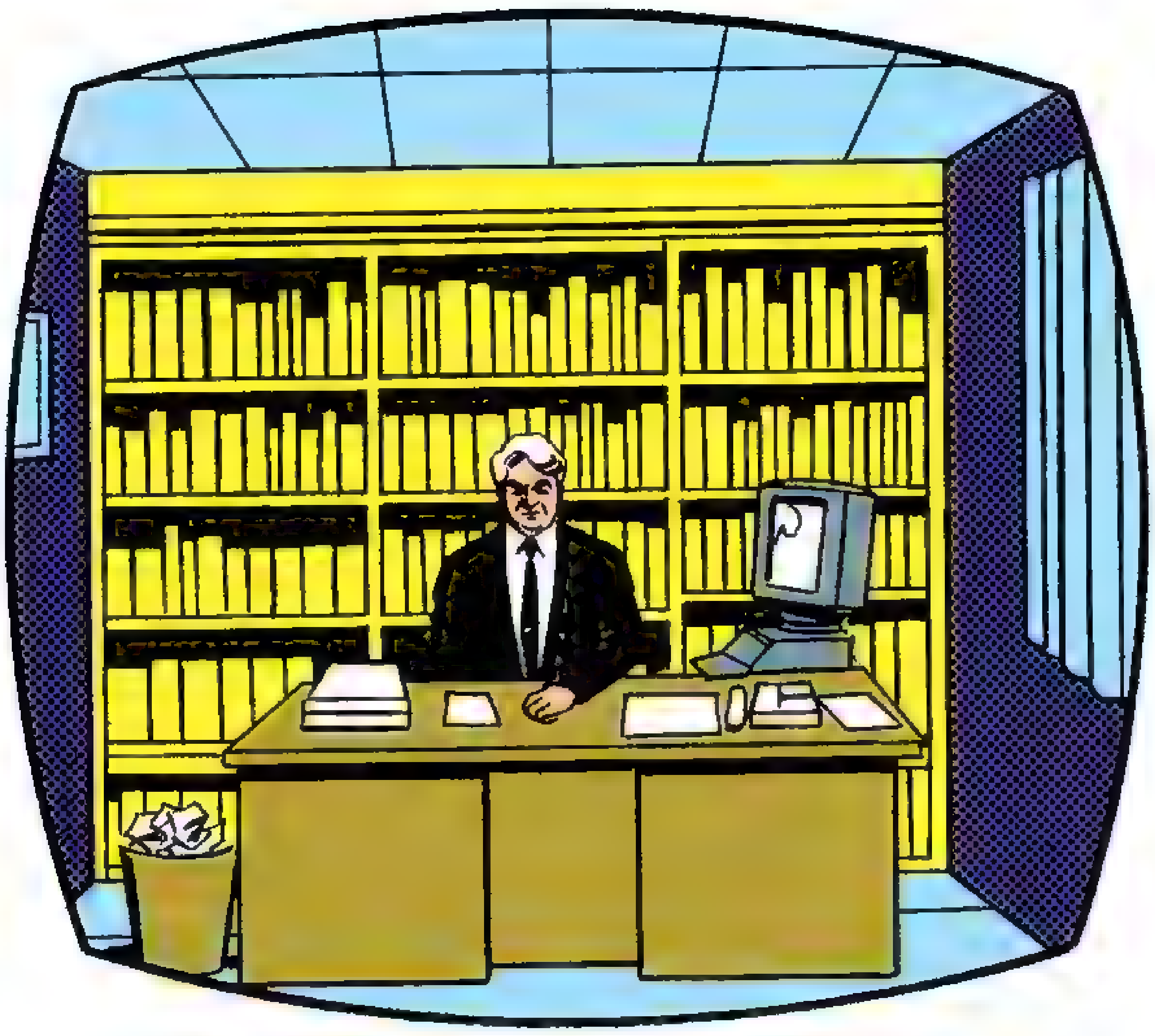

THERE SURE ARE A LOT OF *SUPER HEROES* AROUND THESE DAYS. MORE THAN I CAN KEEP TRACK OF, ANYWAY. I SUPPOSE THAT'S A *GOOD* THING...

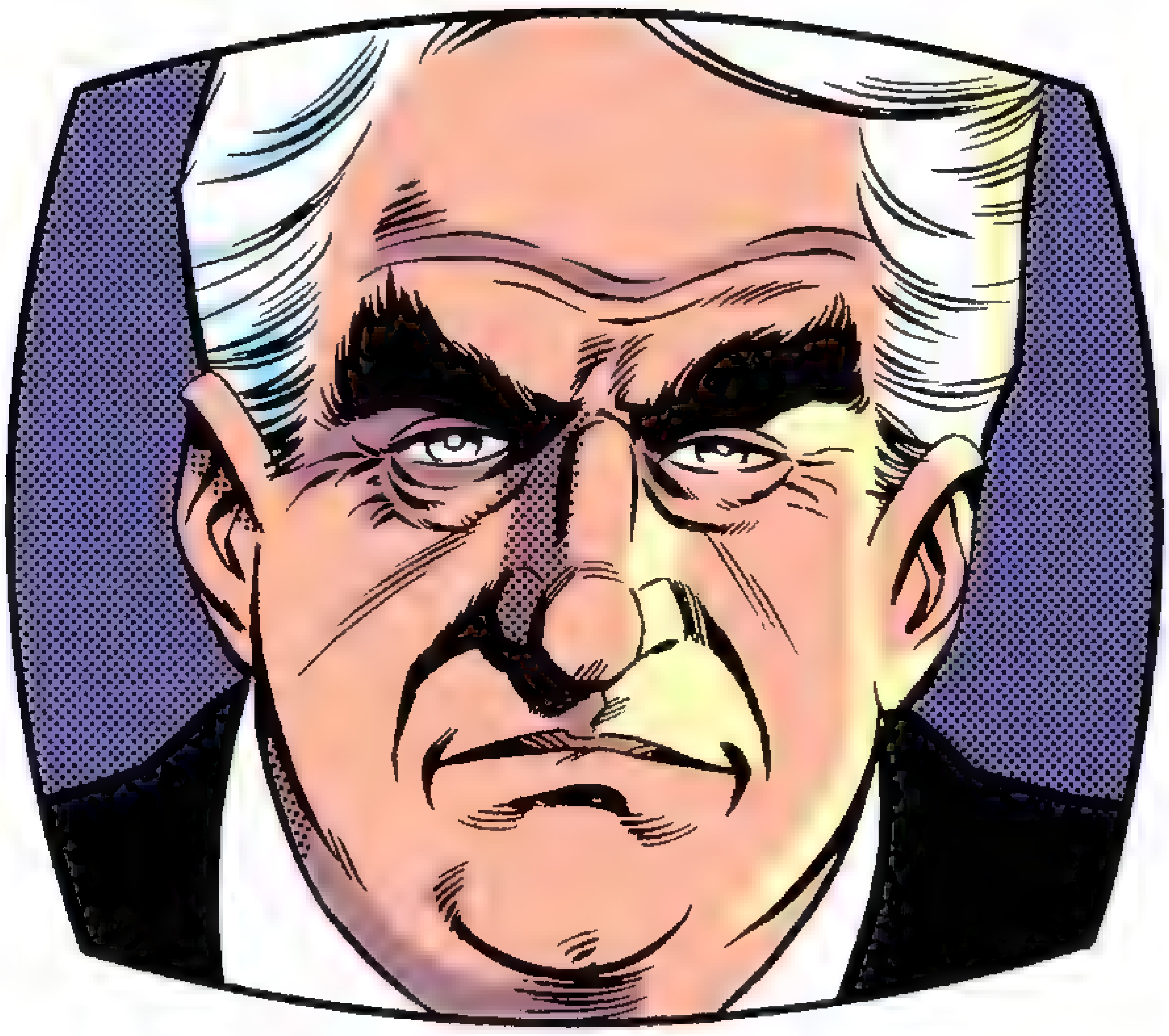
DWAYNE McDUFFIE - STORY
JIM REDDINGTON - PENCILS
ANDY MUSHYNSKY - INKS
JACK MORELLI - LETTERER
ED LAZELLARI - COLORS

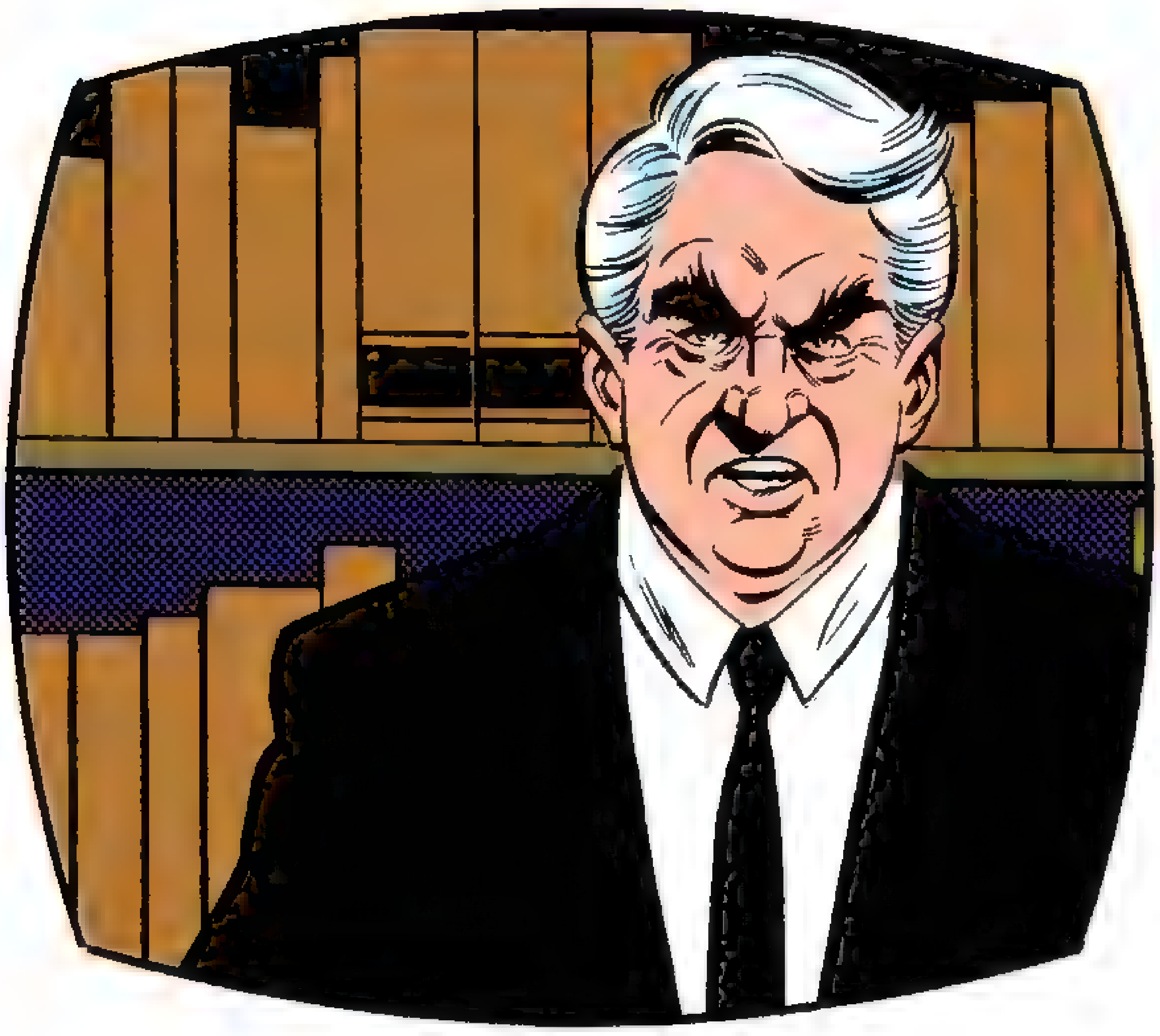

WHEN THERE'S TROUBLE OUT THERE THE SIZE OF *TERMINUS*, I'M ALMOST *HAPPY* TO SEE THE ARMIES OF SUPER-BEINGS THAT SEEM TO COME OUT OF THE WOODWORK WHEN SOMETHING LIKE THIS HAPPENS.
ST. LOUIS 7 KLIW

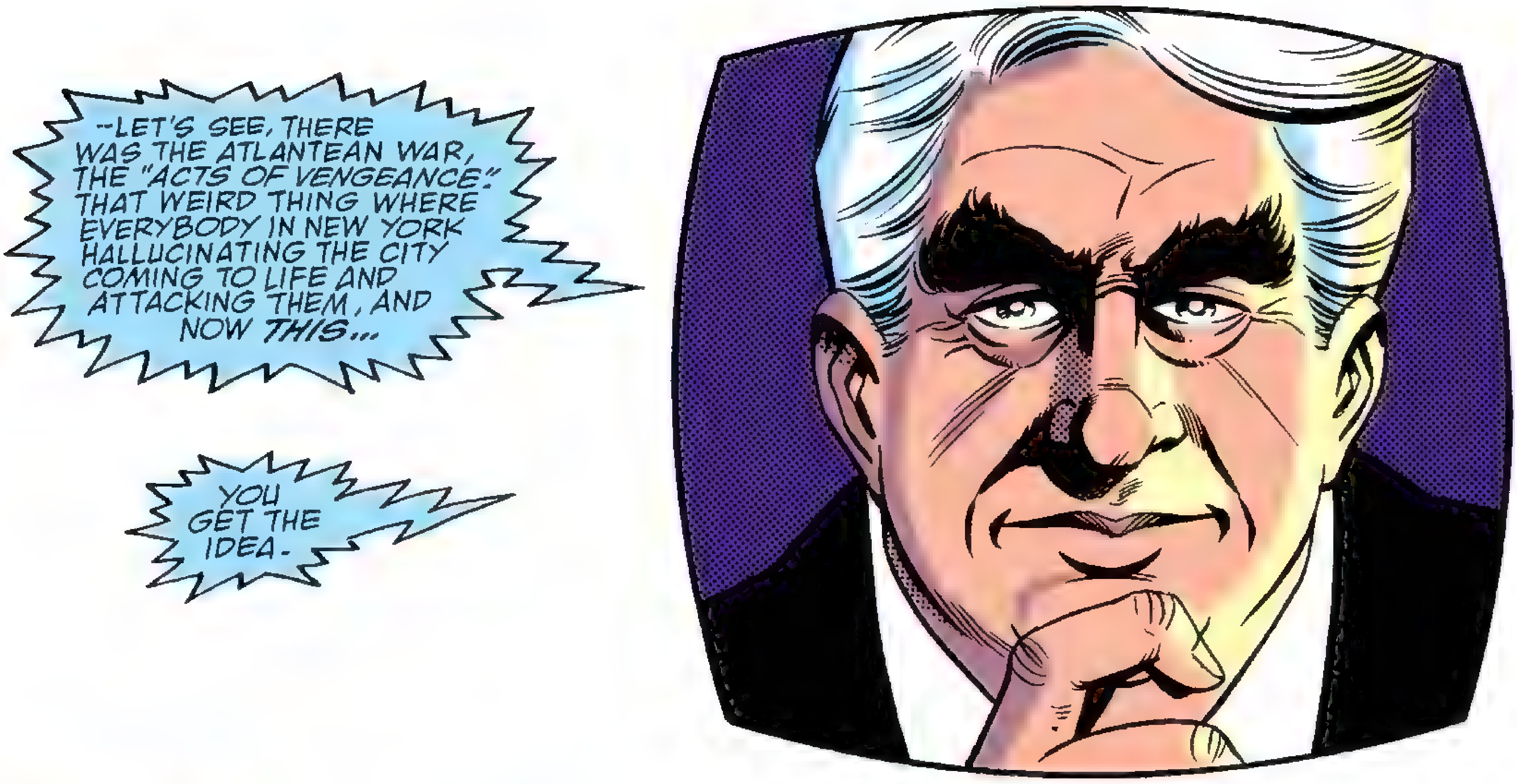

THOSE GUYS SAVED THE WORLD, SO I SUPPOSE *ENOUGH* OF THEM SHOWED UP. BUT I DO WONDER WHERE THE FANTASTIC FOUR, SPIDER-MAN, AND THE PUNISHER WERE WHEN ALL THIS HAPPENED?
WELL, I GUESS THE PUNISHER WAS PROBABLY OUT *SHOOTING* SOMEBODY...

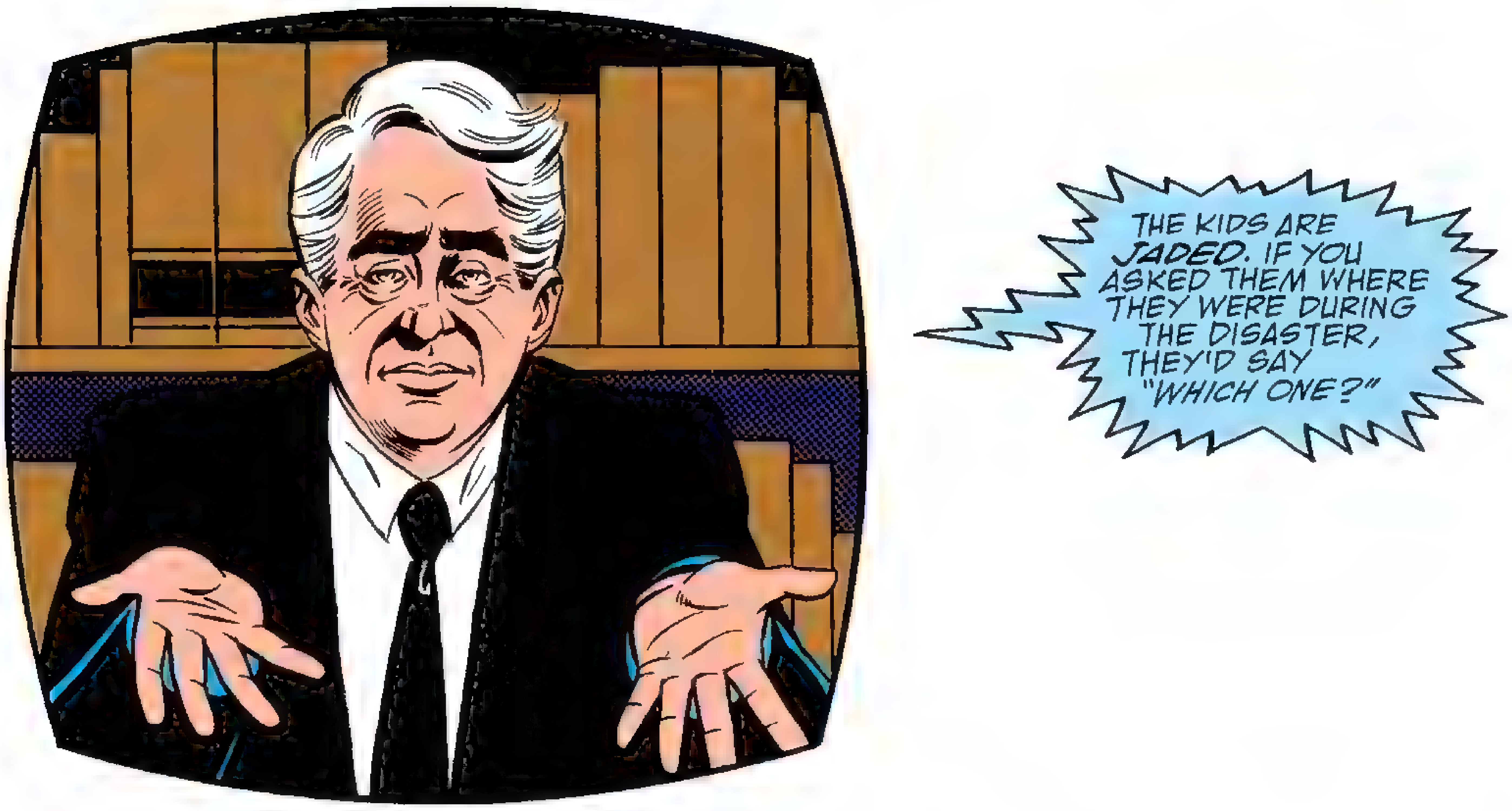

THE *SCARIEST* THING THAT HAPPENED WAS THE *NATIONAL BLACKOUT. MOST* OF THE U.S. WAS LEFT WITHOUT ELECTRICITY FOR *SOME* AMOUNT OF TIME...

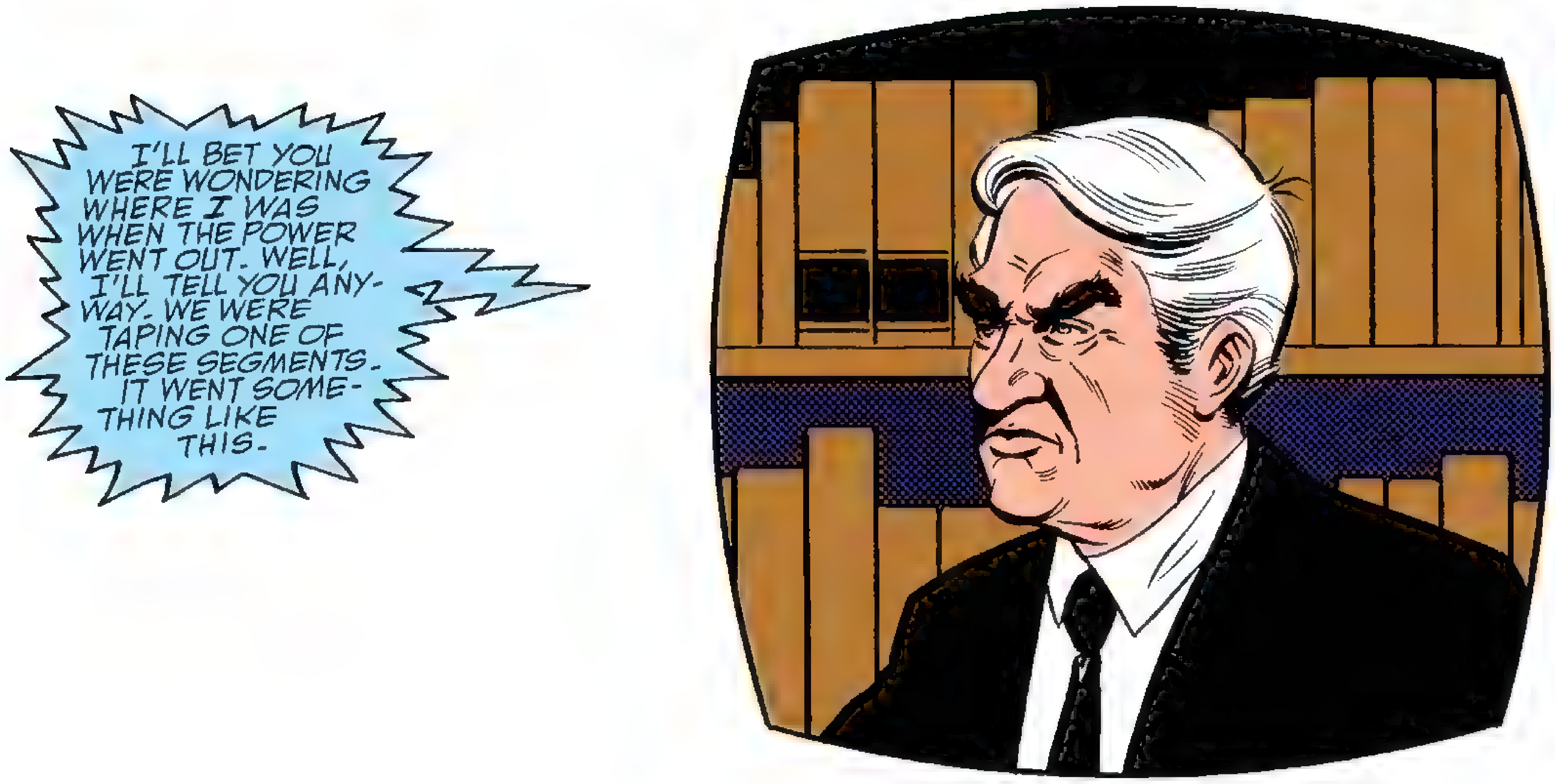

AND *EVERYONE* I'VE RUN INTO IN THE PAST WEEK HAS BEEN ASKING EACH OTHER, "*WHERE* WERE *YOU* WHEN THE LIGHTS WENT OUT?"

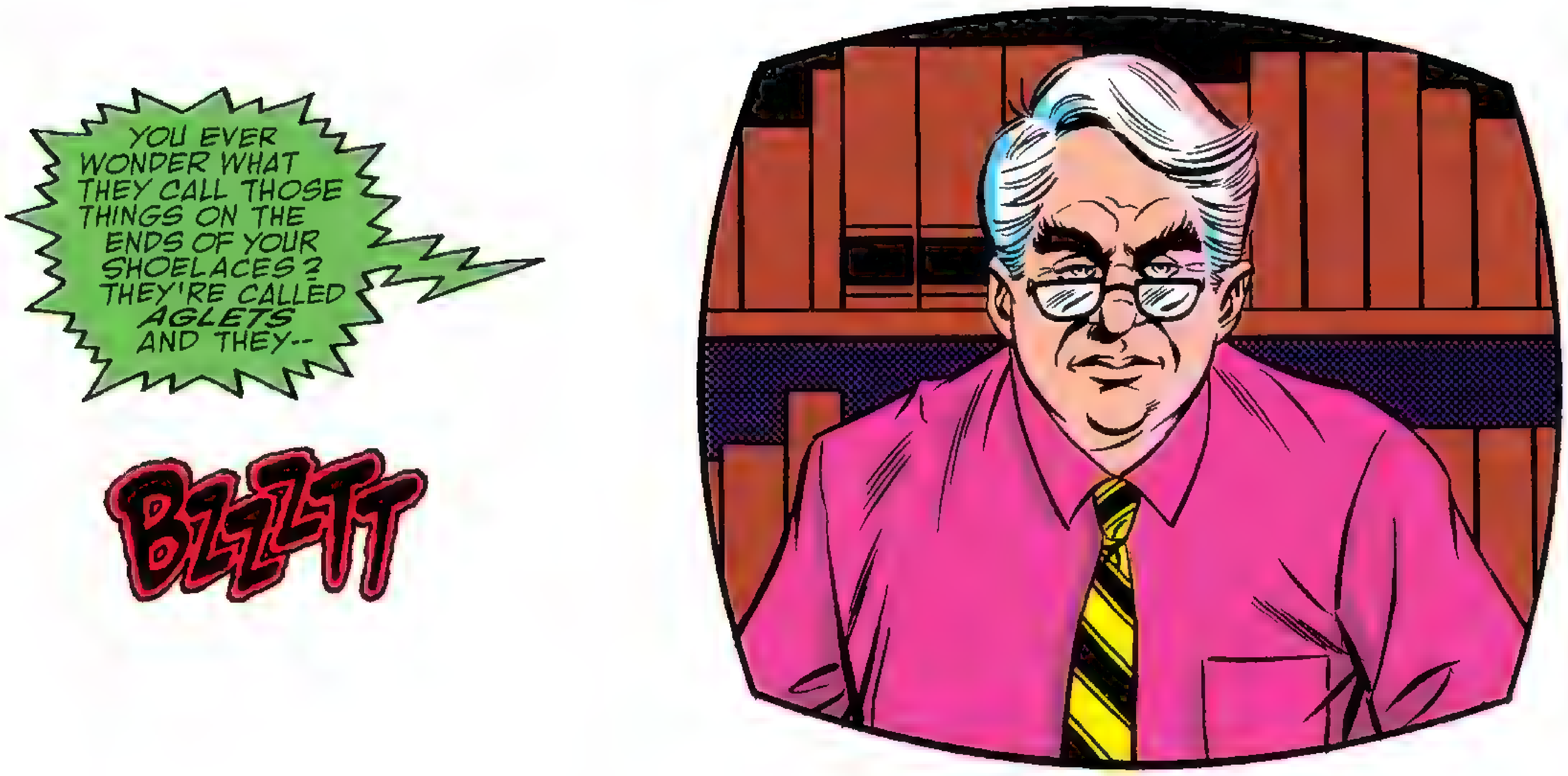

IT REMINDS ME OF THE *MOON LANDING* OR WHEN KENNEDY WAS *SHOT!*
ALL MY FRIENDS REMEMBER *EXACTLY* WHERE THEY WERE, AND HAVE A LITTLE STORY TO TELL ABOUT IT.

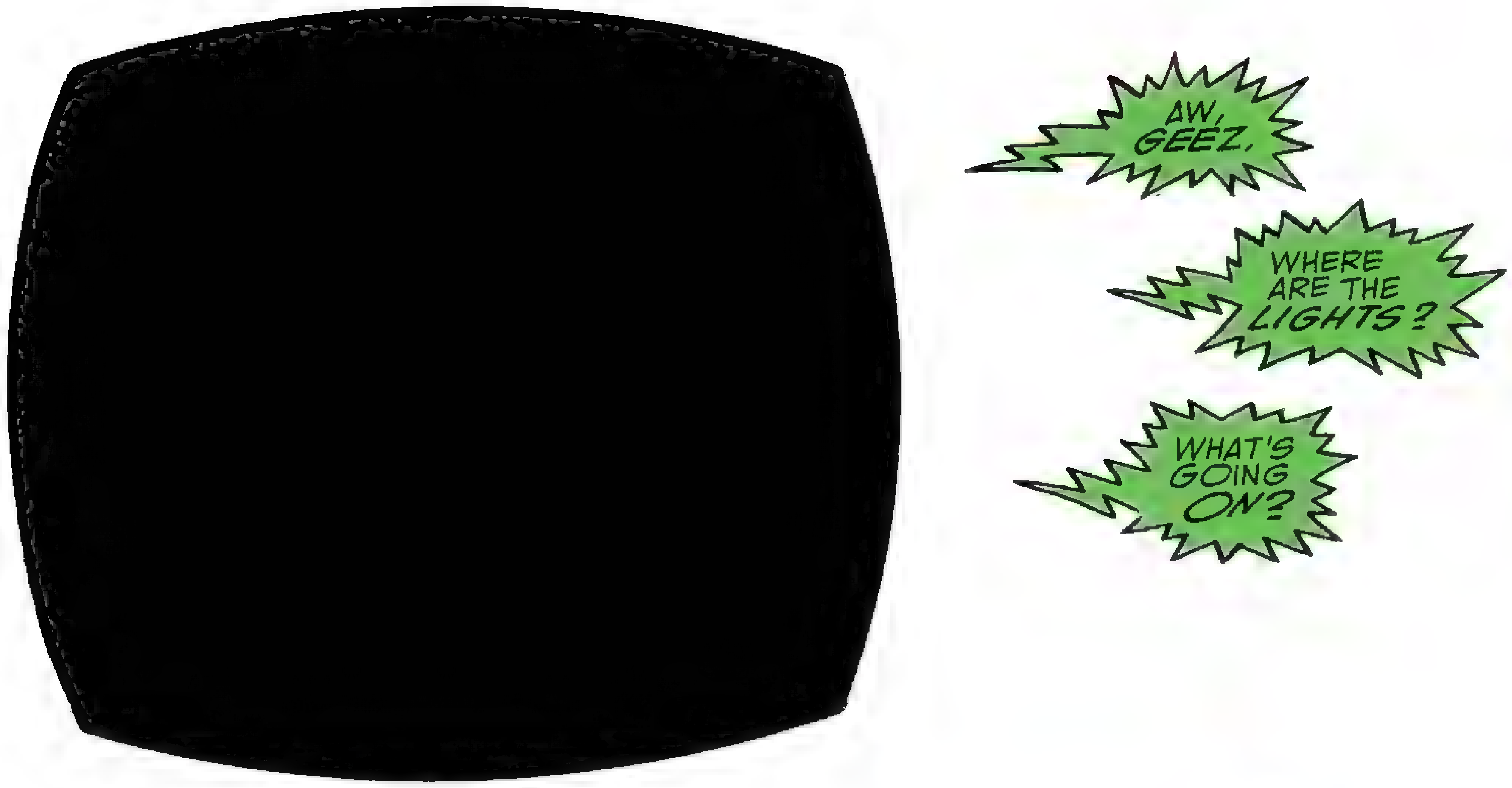

BUT ALL OF THE *YOUNGER* PEOPLE I'VE TALKED TO HAVE A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE...
LATELY, THERE HAVE BEEN SO MANY SUPER HERO... *WARS*, I GUESS YOU'D HAVE TO CALL 'EM--

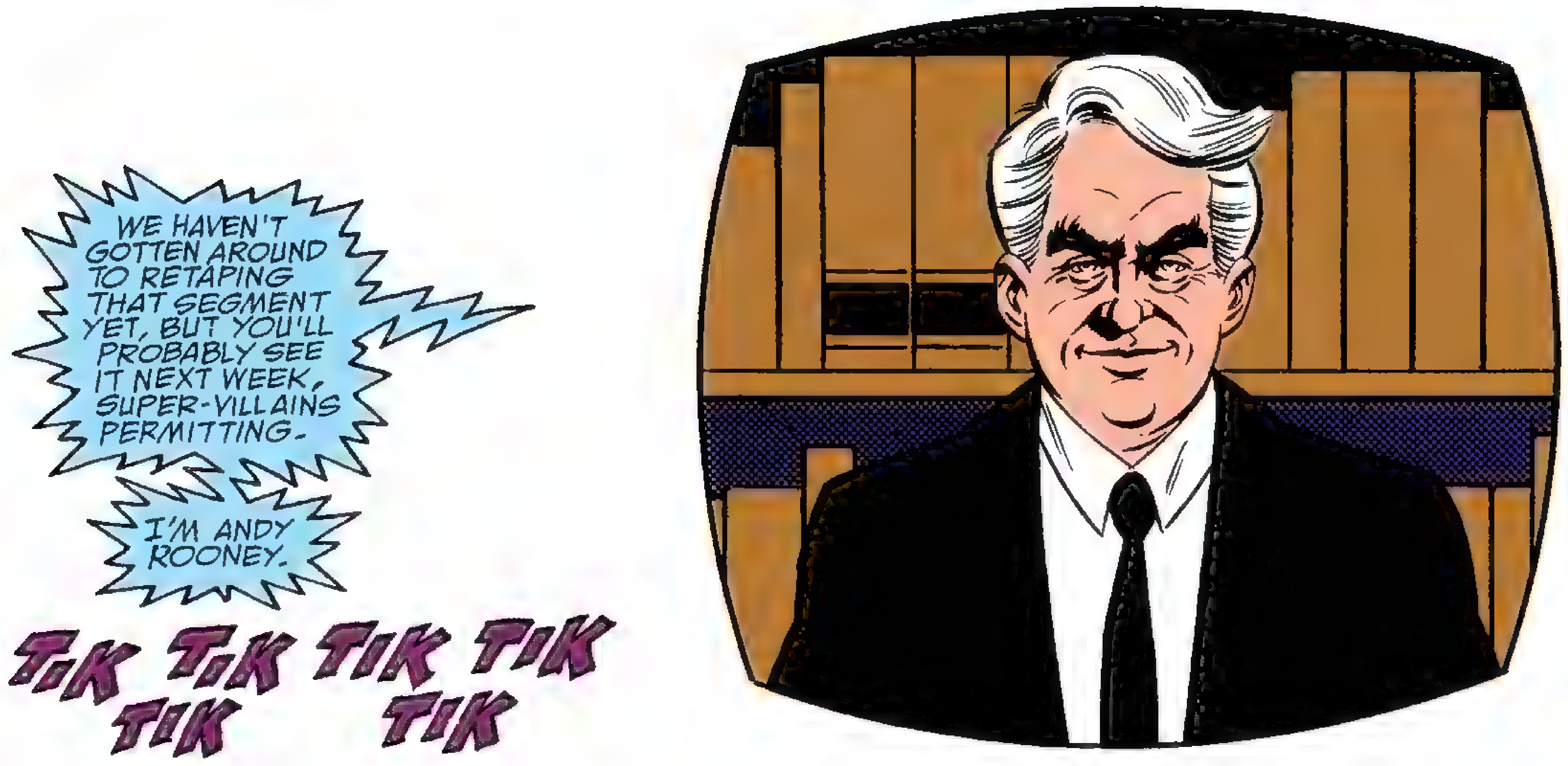

--LET'S SEE, THERE WAS THE ATLANTEAN WAR, THE "ACTS OF VENGEANCE," THAT WEIRD THING WHERE EVERYBODY IN NEW YORK HALLUCINATING THE CITY COMING TO LIFE AND ATTACKING THEM, AND NOW *THIS*...
YOU GET THE IDEA.


THE KIDS ARE ***JADED.*** IF YOU ASKED THEM WHERE THEY WERE DURING THE DISASTER, THEY'D SAY *"WHICH ONE?"*


I'LL BET YOU WERE WONDERING WHERE *I* WAS WHEN THE POWER WENT OUT. WELL, I'LL TELL YOU ANYWAY. WE WERE TAPING ONE OF THESE SEGMENTS. IT WENT SOMETHING LIKE THIS.

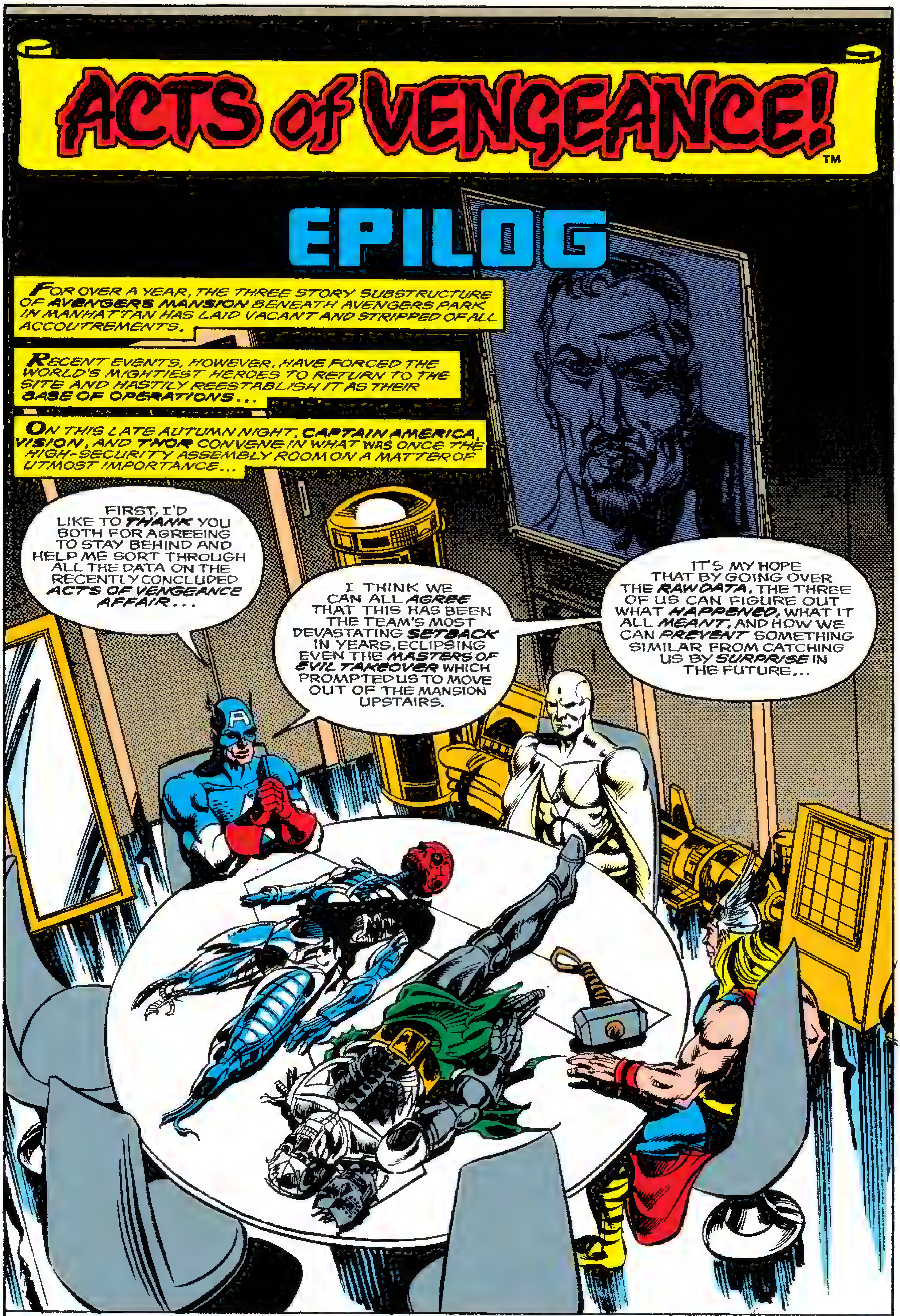

YOU EVER WONDER WHAT THEY CALL THOSE THINGS ON THE ENDS OF YOUR SHOELACES? THEY'RE CALLED *AGLETS* AND THEY--
BZZZTT


AW, *GEEZ.*
WHERE ARE THE *LIGHTS?*
WHAT'S GOING *ON?*

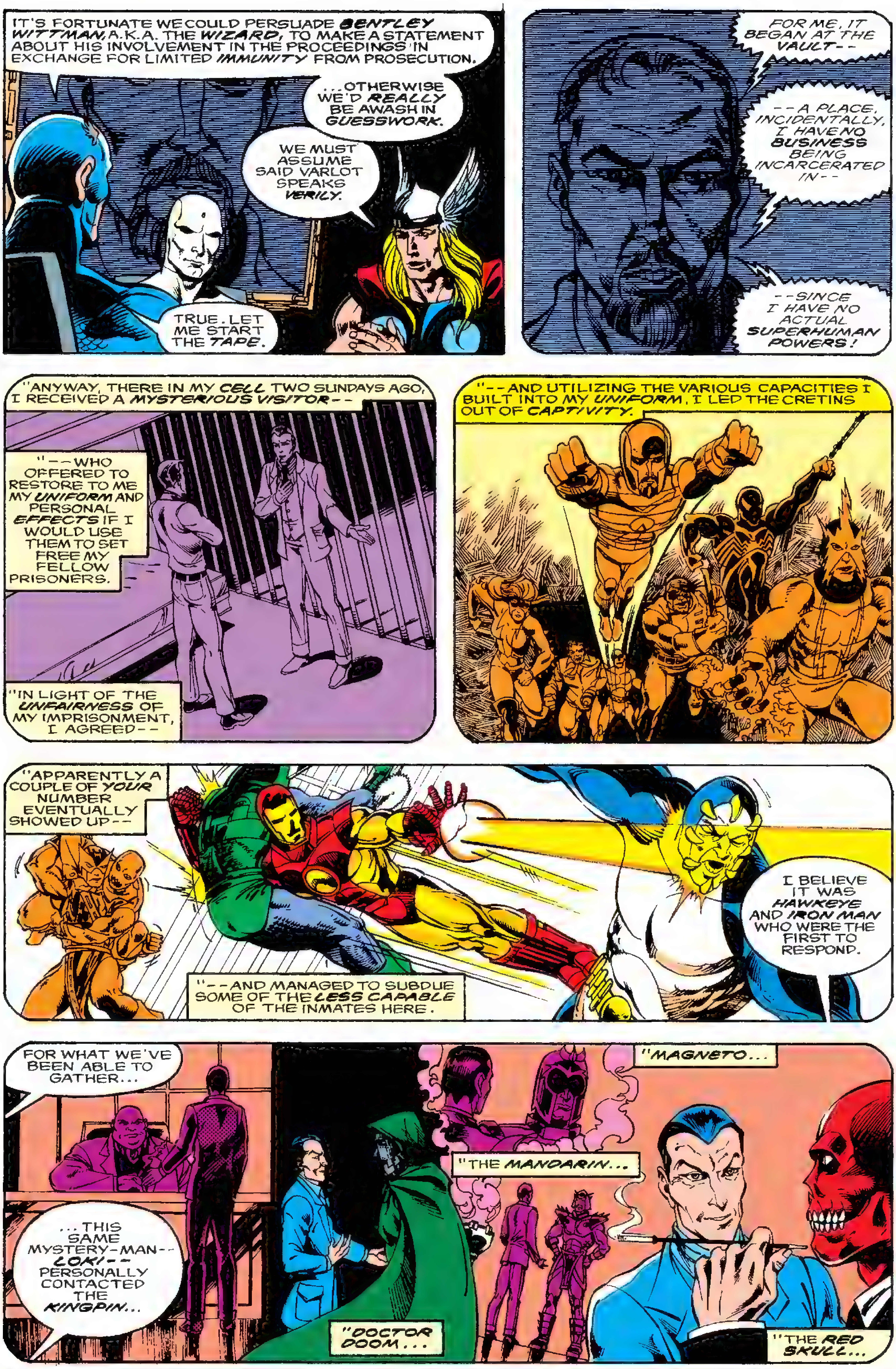

WE HAVEN'T GOTTEN AROUND TO RETAPING THAT SEGMENT YET, BUT YOU'LL PROBABLY SEE IT NEXT WEEK, SUPER-VILLAINS PERMITTING.
I'M ANDY ROONEY.
TIK TIK TIK TIK TIK TIK

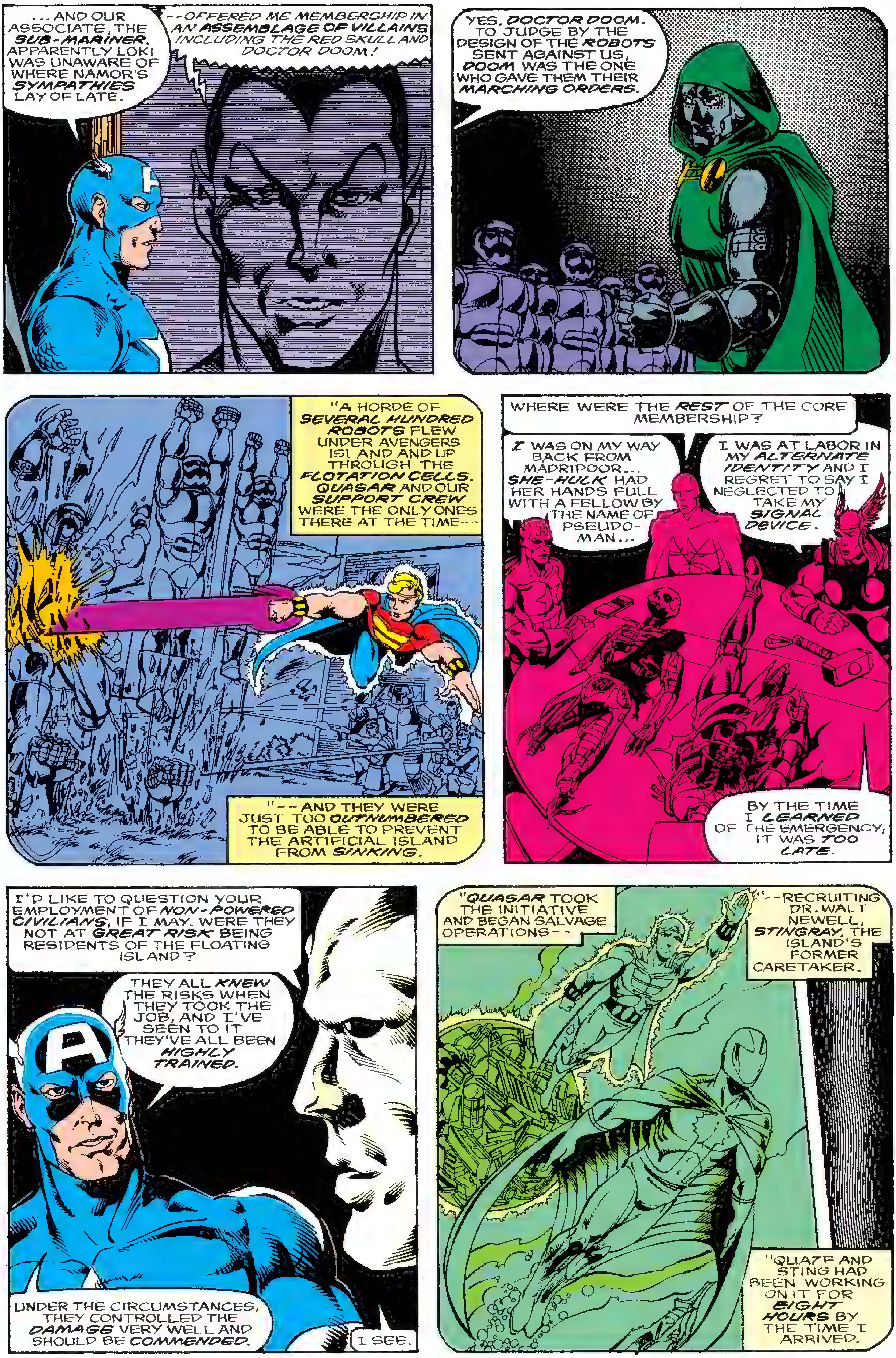
ACTS of VENGEANCE!™

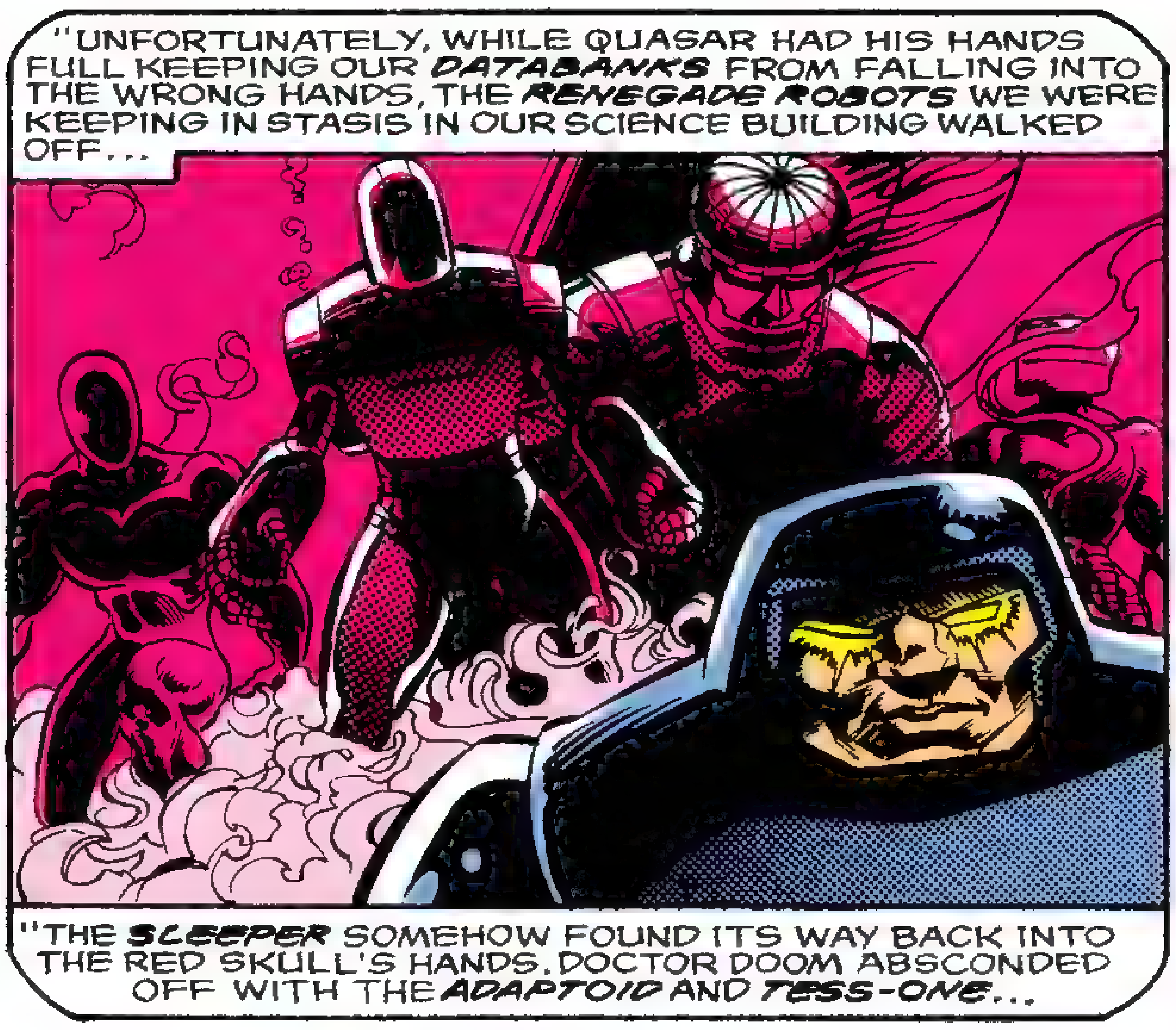
EPILOG

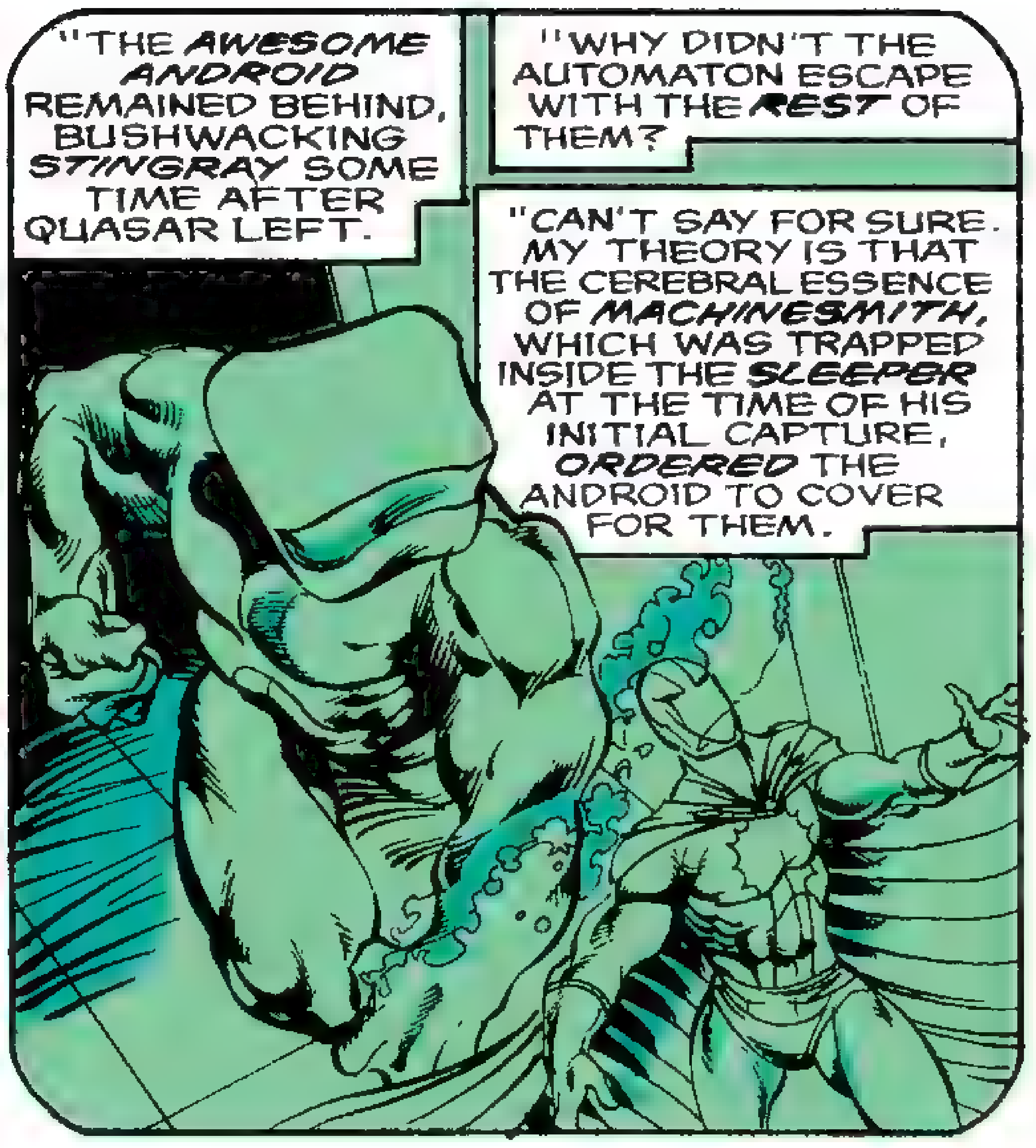

FOR OVER A YEAR, THE THREE STORY SUBSTRUCTURE OF AVENGERS MANSION BENEATH AVENGERS PARK IN MANHATTAN HAS LAID VACANT AND STRIPPED OF ALL ACCOUTREMENTS.
RECENT EVENTS, HOWEVER, HAVE FORCED THE WORLD'S MIGHTIEST HEROES TO RETURN TO THE SITE AND HASTILY REESTABLISH IT AS THEIR BASE OF OPERATIONS...
ON THIS LATE AUTUMN NIGHT, CAPTAIN AMERICA, VISION, AND THOR CONVENE IN WHAT WAS ONCE THE HIGH-SECURITY ASSEMBLY ROOM ON A MATTER OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE...
FIRST, I'D LIKE TO THANK YOU BOTH FOR AGREEING TO STAY BEHIND AND HELP ME SORT THROUGH ALL THE DATA ON THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED ACTS OF VENGEANCE AFFAIR...
I THINK WE CAN ALL AGREE THAT THIS HAS BEEN THE TEAM'S MOST DEVASTATING SETBACK IN YEARS, ECLIPSING EVEN THE MASTERS OF EVIL TAKEOVER WHICH PROMPTED US TO MOVE OUT OF THE MANSION UPSTAIRS.
IT'S MY HOPE THAT BY GOING OVER THE RAW DATA, THE THREE OF US CAN FIGURE OUT WHAT HAPPENED, WHAT IT ALL MEANT, AND HOW WE CAN PREVENT SOMETHING SIMILAR FROM CATCHING US BY SURPRISE IN THE FUTURE...

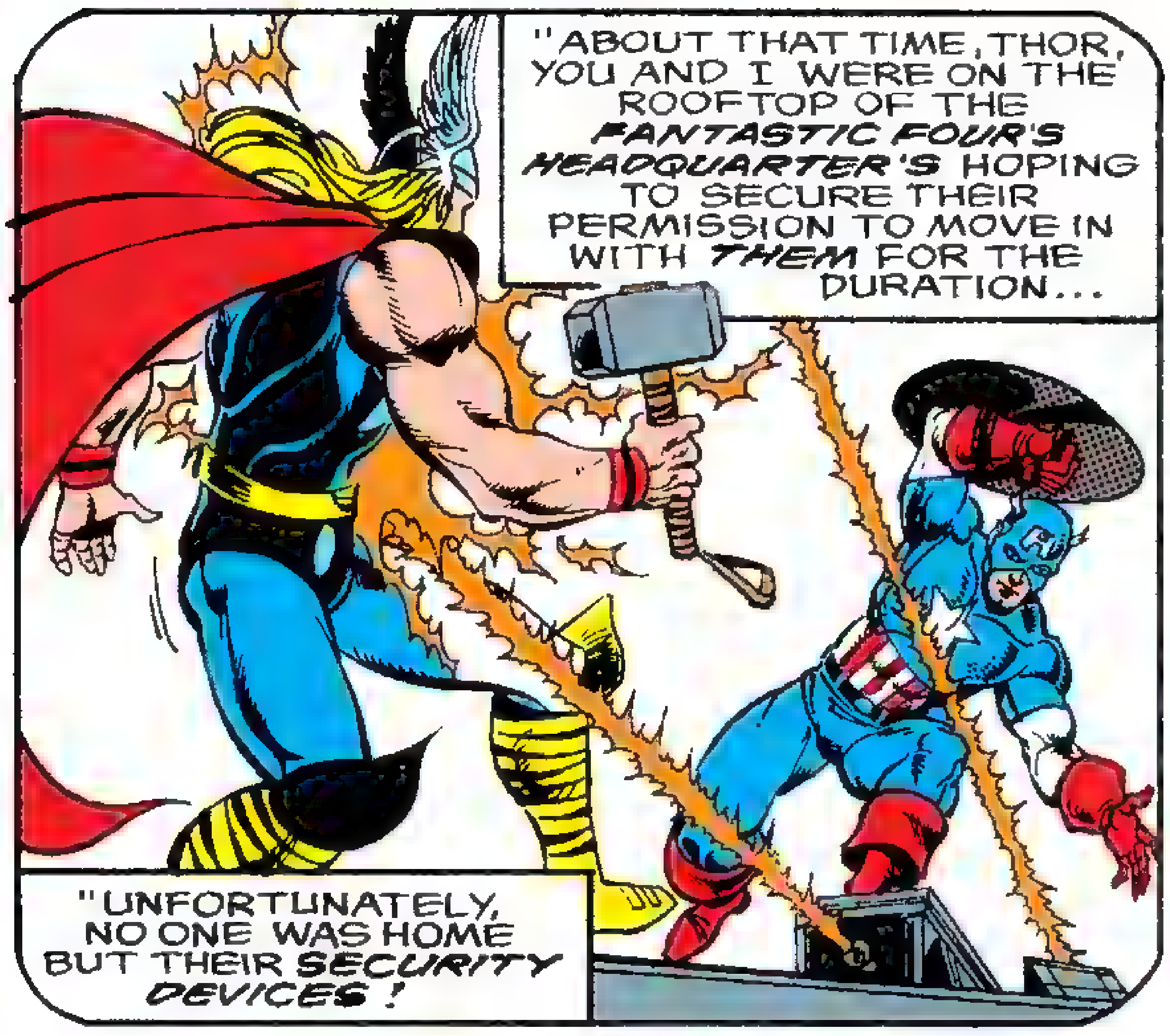
MARK GRUENWALD WORDS • VINCE MIELCAREK PICTURES • BOB DOWNS INKS • JANICE CHIANG LETTERS • DAVE SAMPSON COLORS • INCORPORATING MATERIAL BY BYRNE • McDUFFIE • MACKIE • DeFALCO

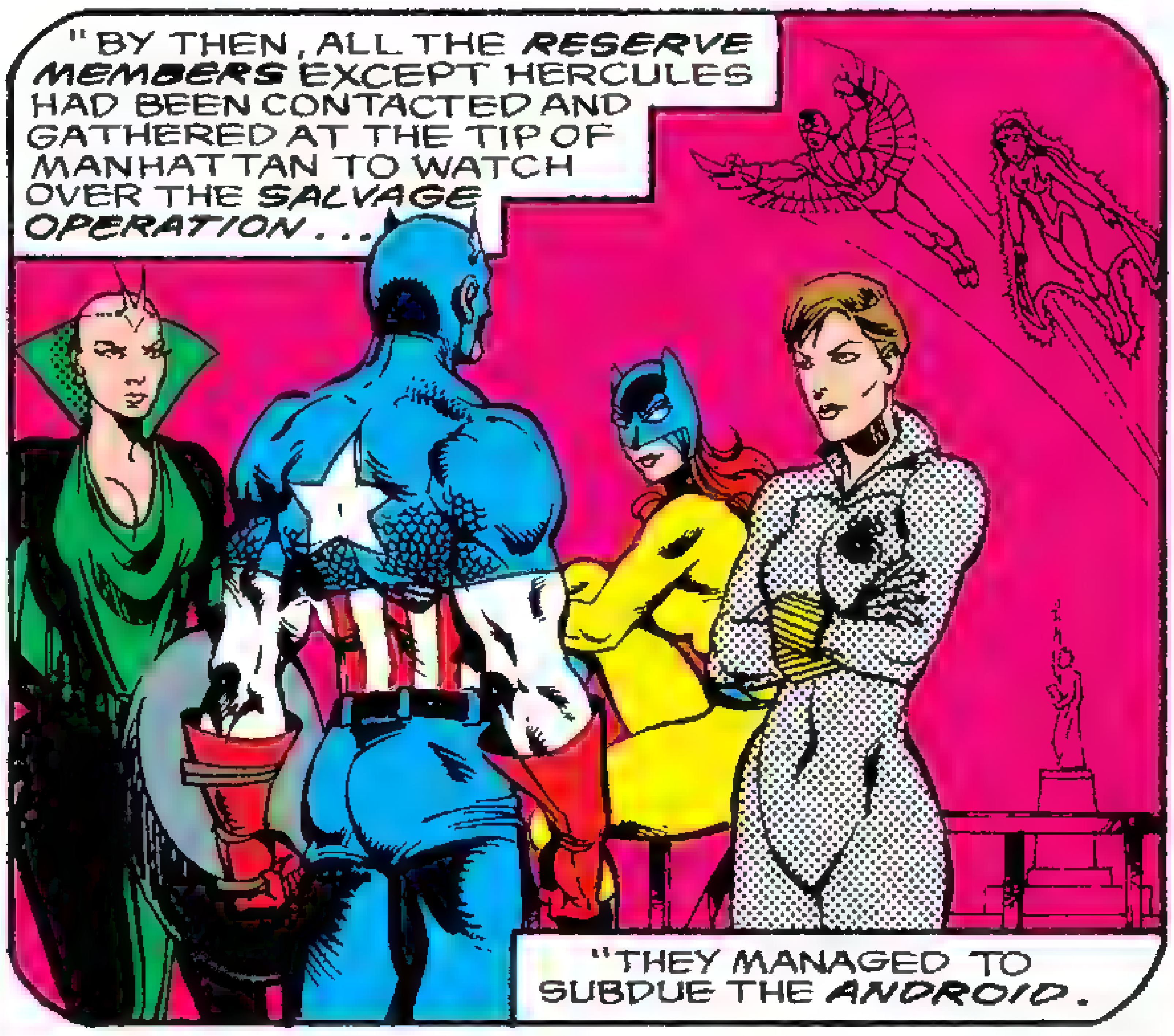

IT'S FORTUNATE WE COULD PERSUADE BENTLEY WITTMAN, A.K.A. THE WIZARD, TO MAKE A STATEMENT ABOUT HIS INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROCEEDINGS IN EXCHANGE FOR LIMITED IMMUNITY FROM PROSECUTION.
...OTHERWISE WE'D REALLY BE AWASH IN GUESSWORK.
WE MUST ASSUME SAID VARLOT SPEAKS VERILY.
TRUE. LET ME START THE TAPE.
FOR ME, IT BEGAN AT THE VAULT--
--A PLACE, INCIDENTALLY, I HAVE NO BUSINESS BEING INCARCERATED IN--
--SINCE I HAVE NO ACTUAL SUPERHUMAN POWERS!
"ANYWAY, THERE IN MY CELL TWO SUNDAYS AGO, I RECEIVED A MYSTERIOUS VISITOR--
"--WHO OFFERED TO RESTORE TO ME MY UNIFORM AND PERSONAL EFFECTS IF I WOULD USE THEM TO SET FREE MY FELLOW PRISONERS.
"IN LIGHT OF THE UNFAIRNESS OF MY IMPRISONMENT, I AGREED--
"--AND UTILIZING THE VARIOUS CAPACITIES I BUILT INTO MY UNIFORM, I LED THE CRETINS OUT OF CAPTIVITY.
"APPARENTLY A COUPLE OF YOUR NUMBER EVENTUALLY SHOWED UP--
I BELIEVE IT WAS HAWKEYE AND IRON MAN WHO WERE THE FIRST TO RESPOND.
"--AND MANAGED TO SUBDUE SOME OF THE LESS CAPABLE OF THE INMATES HERE.
FOR WHAT WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO GATHER...
...THIS SAME MYSTERY-MAN--LOKI--PERSONALLY CONTACTED THE KINGPIN...
"DOCTOR DOOM...
"MAGNETO...
"THE MANDARIN...
"THE RED SKULL...

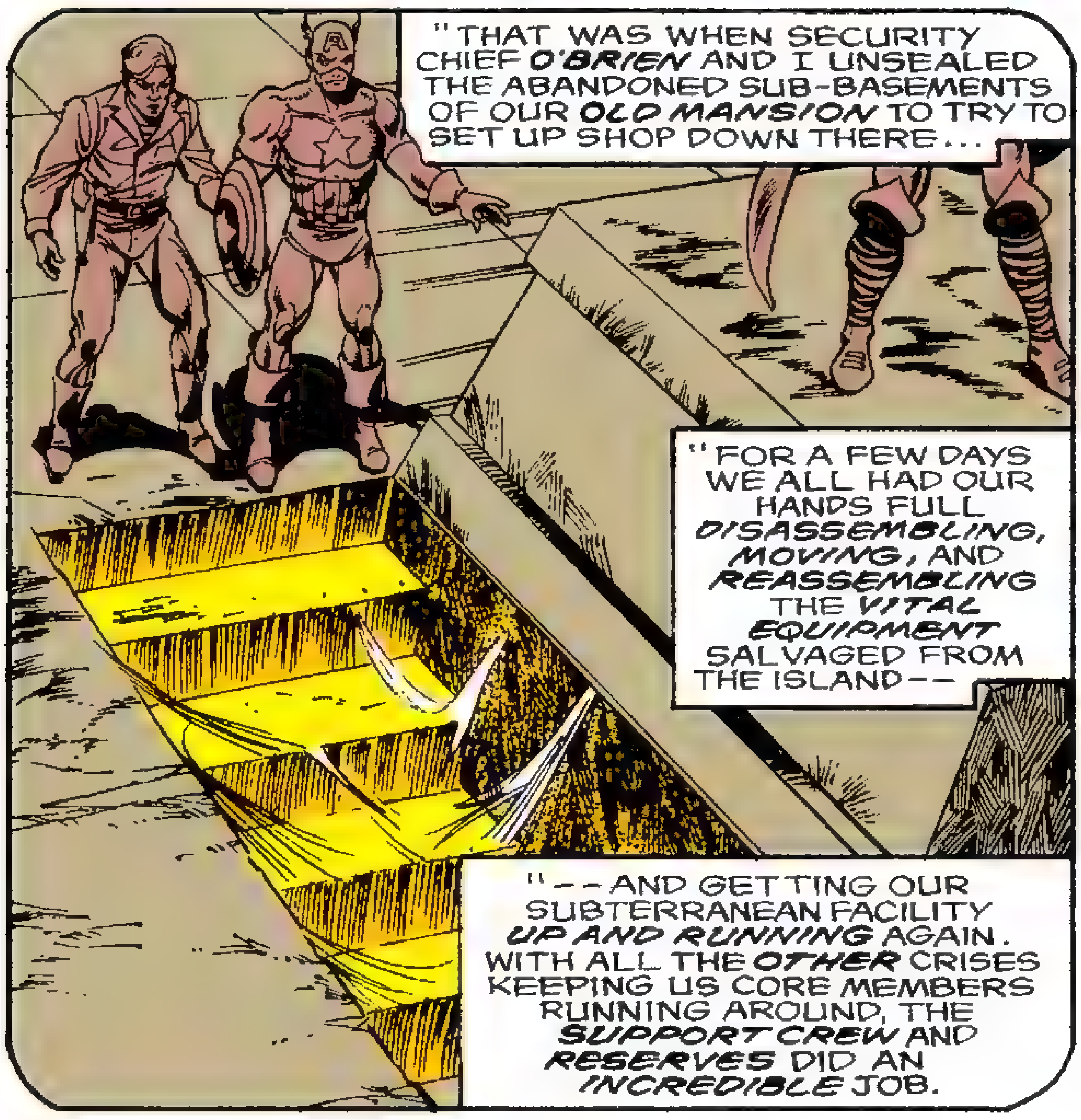

...AND OUR ASSOCIATE, THE SUB-MARINER. APPARENTLY LOKI WAS UNAWARE OF WHERE NAMOR'S SYMPATHIES LAY OF LATE.
--OFFERED ME MEMBERSHIP IN AN ASSEMBLAGE OF VILLAINS INCLUDING THE RED SKULL AND DOCTOR DOOM!
YES. DOCTOR DOOM. TO JUDGE BY THE DESIGN OF THE ROBOTS SENT AGAINST US, DOOM WAS THE ONE WHO GAVE THEM THEIR MARCHING ORDERS.
"A HORDE OF SEVERAL HUNDRED ROBOTS FLEW UNDER AVENGERS ISLAND AND UP THROUGH THE FLOTATION CELLS. QUASAR AND OUR SUPPORT CREW WERE THE ONLY ONES THERE AT THE TIME--
"--AND THEY WERE JUST TOO OUTNUMBERED TO BE ABLE TO PREVENT THE ARTIFICIAL ISLAND FROM SINKING.
WHERE WERE THE REST OF THE CORE MEMBERSHIP?
I WAS ON MY WAY BACK FROM MADRIPOOR... SHE-HULK HAD HER HANDS FULL WITH A FELLOW BY THE NAME OF PSEUDO-MAN...
I WAS AT LABOR IN MY ALTERNATE IDENTITY AND I REGRET TO SAY I NEGLECTED TO TAKE MY SIGNAL DEVICE.
BY THE TIME I LEARNED OF THE EMERGENCY, IT WAS TOO LATE.
I'D LIKE TO QUESTION YOUR EMPLOYMENT OF NON-POWERED CIVILIANS, IF I MAY. WERE THEY NOT AT GREAT RISK BEING RESIDENTS OF THE FLOATING ISLAND?
THEY ALL KNEW THE RISKS WHEN THEY TOOK THE JOB, AND I'VE SEEN TO IT THEY'VE ALL BEEN HIGHLY TRAINED.
UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, THEY CONTROLLED THE DAMAGE VERY WELL AND SHOULD BE COMMENDED.
I SEE.
"QUASAR TOOK THE INITIATIVE AND BEGAN SALVAGE OPERATIONS--
"--RECRUITING DR. WALT NEWELL, STINGRAY, THE ISLAND'S FORMER CARETAKER.
"QUAZE AND STING HAD BEEN WORKING ON IT FOR EIGHT HOURS BY THE TIME I ARRIVED.

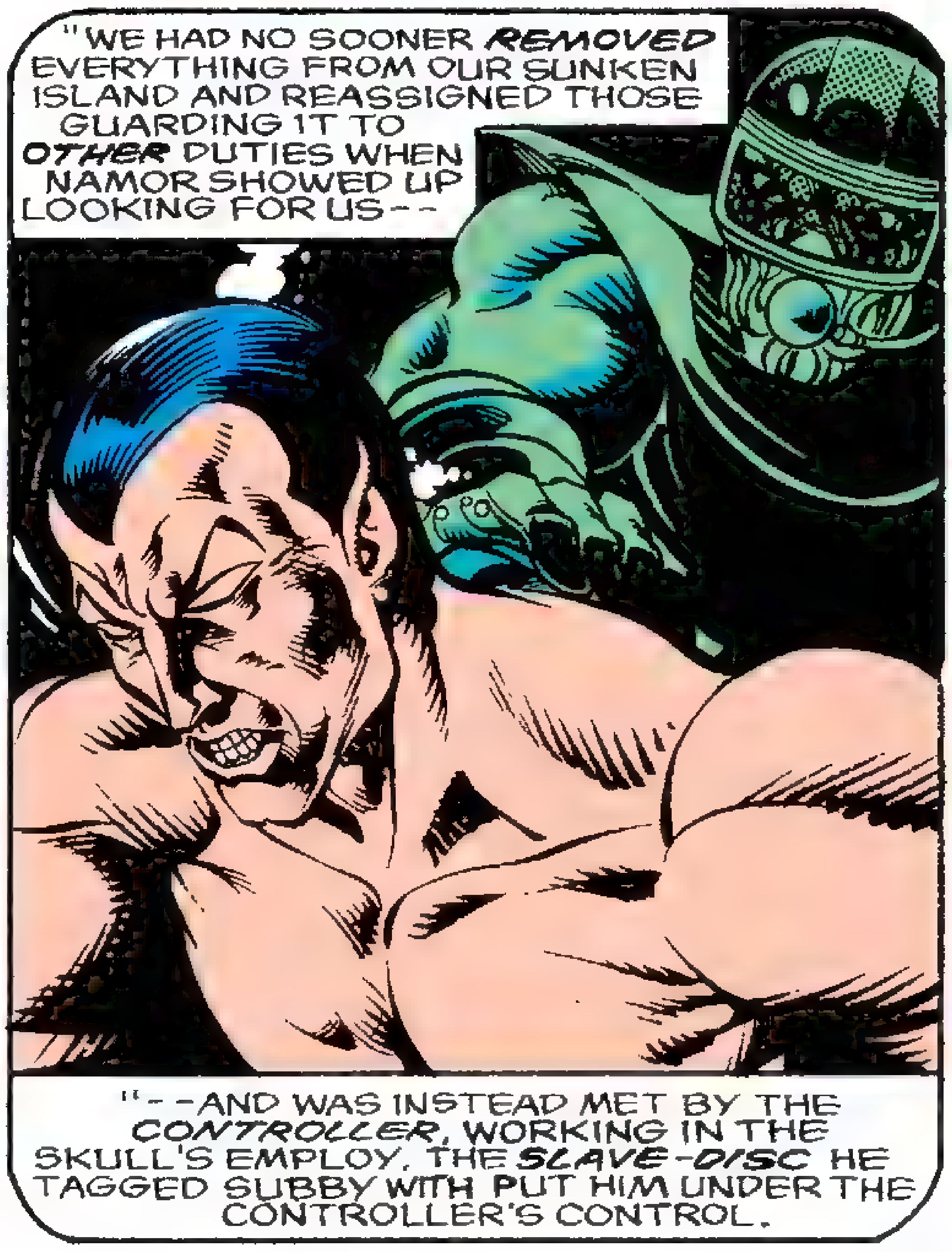

"UNFORTUNATELY, WHILE QUASAR HAD HIS HANDS FULL KEEPING OUR ***DATABANKS*** FROM FALLING INTO THE WRONG HANDS, THE ***RENEGADE ROBOTS*** WE WERE KEEPING IN STASIS IN OUR SCIENCE BUILDING WALKED OFF...
"THE ***SLEEPER*** SOMEHOW FOUND ITS WAY BACK INTO THE RED SKULL'S HANDS, DOCTOR DOOM ABSCONDED OFF WITH THE ***ADAPTOID*** AND ***TESS-ONE***...

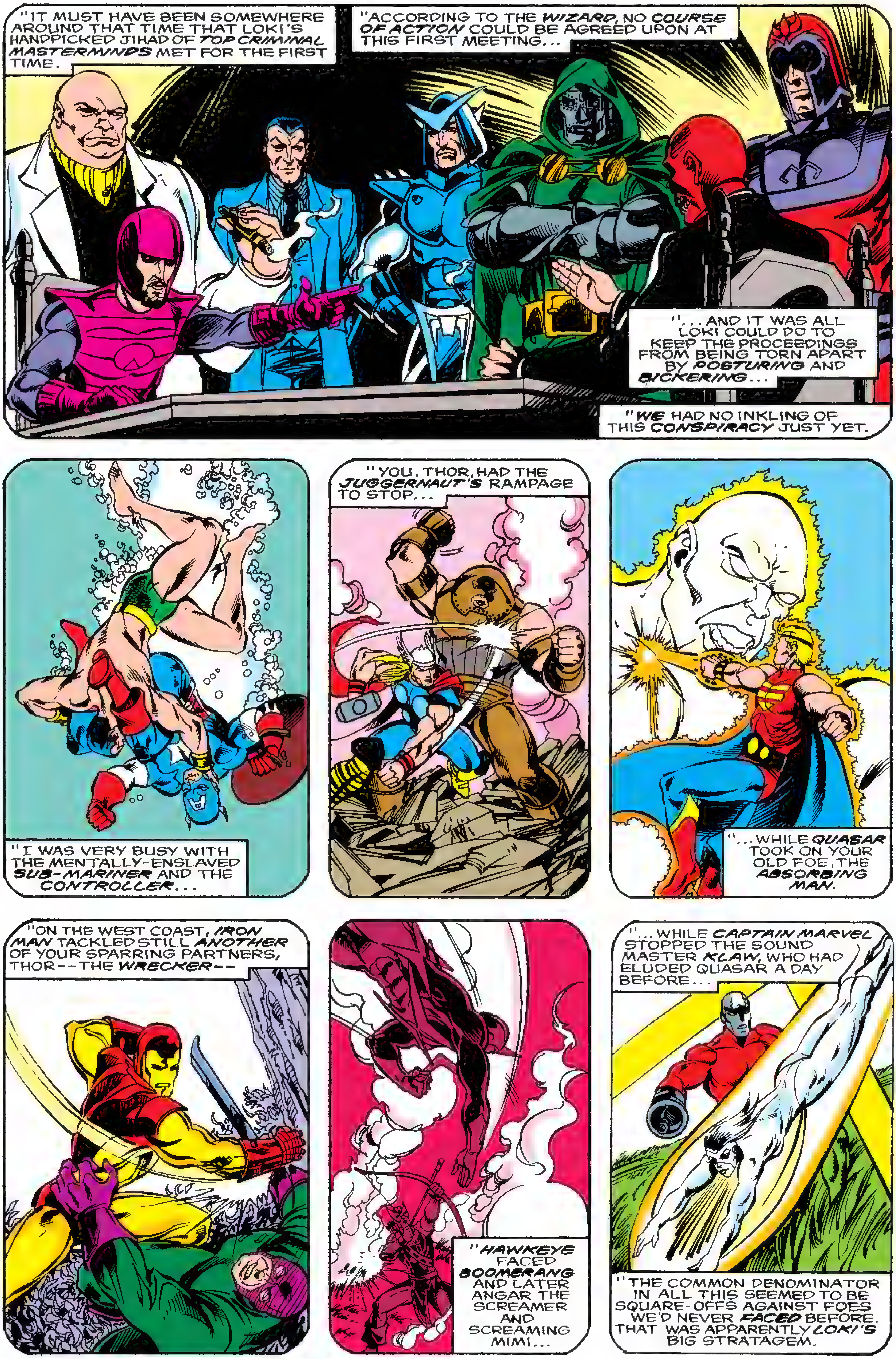

"THE ***AWESOME ANDROID*** REMAINED BEHIND, BUSHWACKING ***STINGRAY*** SOME TIME AFTER QUASAR LEFT.
"WHY DIDN'T THE AUTOMATON ESCAPE WITH THE ***REST*** OF THEM?
"CAN'T SAY FOR SURE. MY THEORY IS THAT THE CEREBRAL ESSENCE OF ***MACHINESMITH***, WHICH WAS TRAPPED INSIDE THE ***SLEEPER*** AT THE TIME OF HIS INITIAL CAPTURE, ***ORDERED*** THE ANDROID TO COVER FOR THEM.

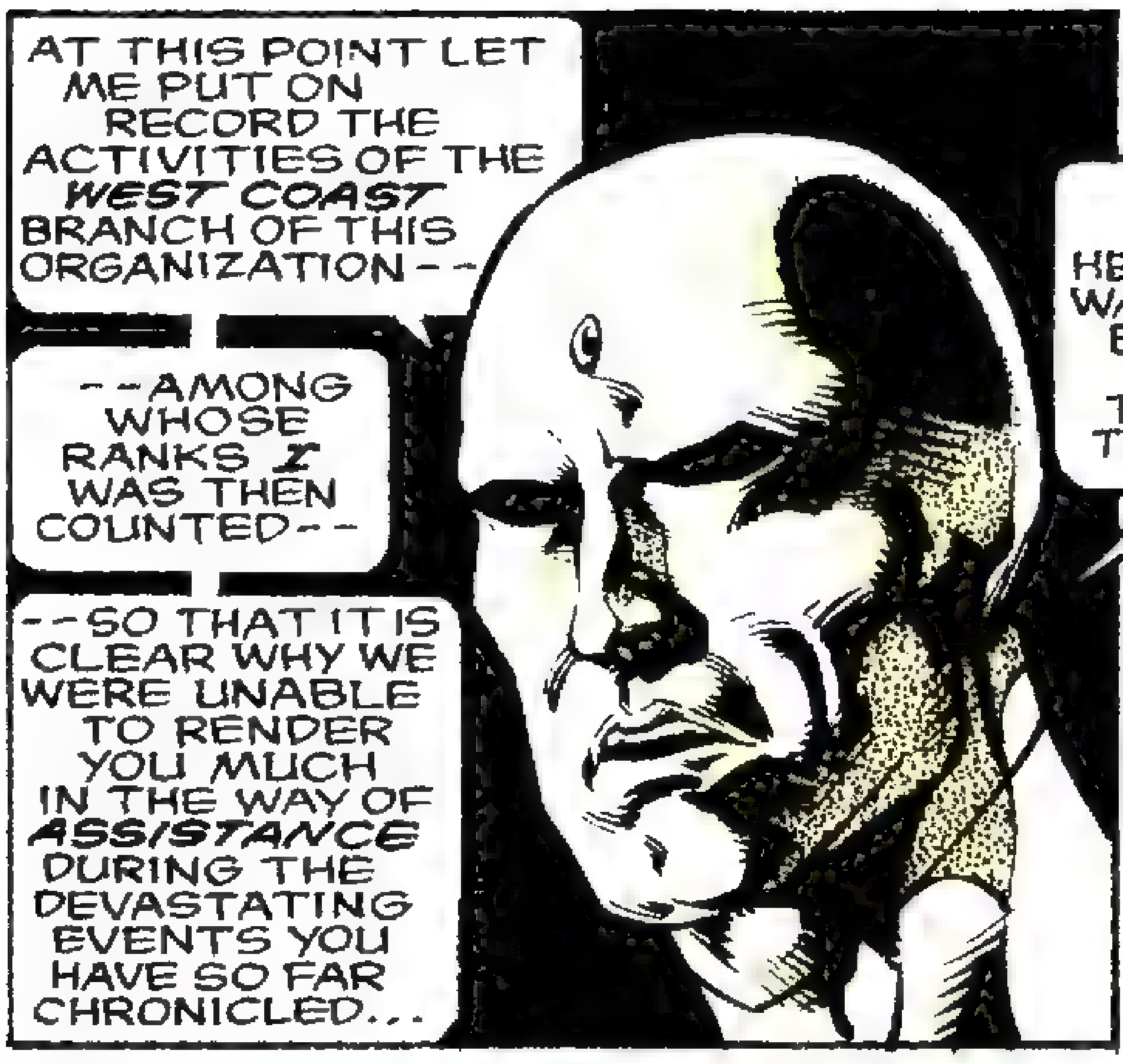

"ABOUT THAT TIME, THOR, YOU AND I WERE ON THE ROOFTOP OF THE ***FANTASTIC FOUR'S HEADQUARTER'S*** HOPING TO SECURE THEIR PERMISSION TO MOVE IN WITH ***THEM*** FOR THE DURATION...
"UNFORTUNATELY, NO ONE WAS HOME BUT THEIR ***SECURITY DEVICES!***

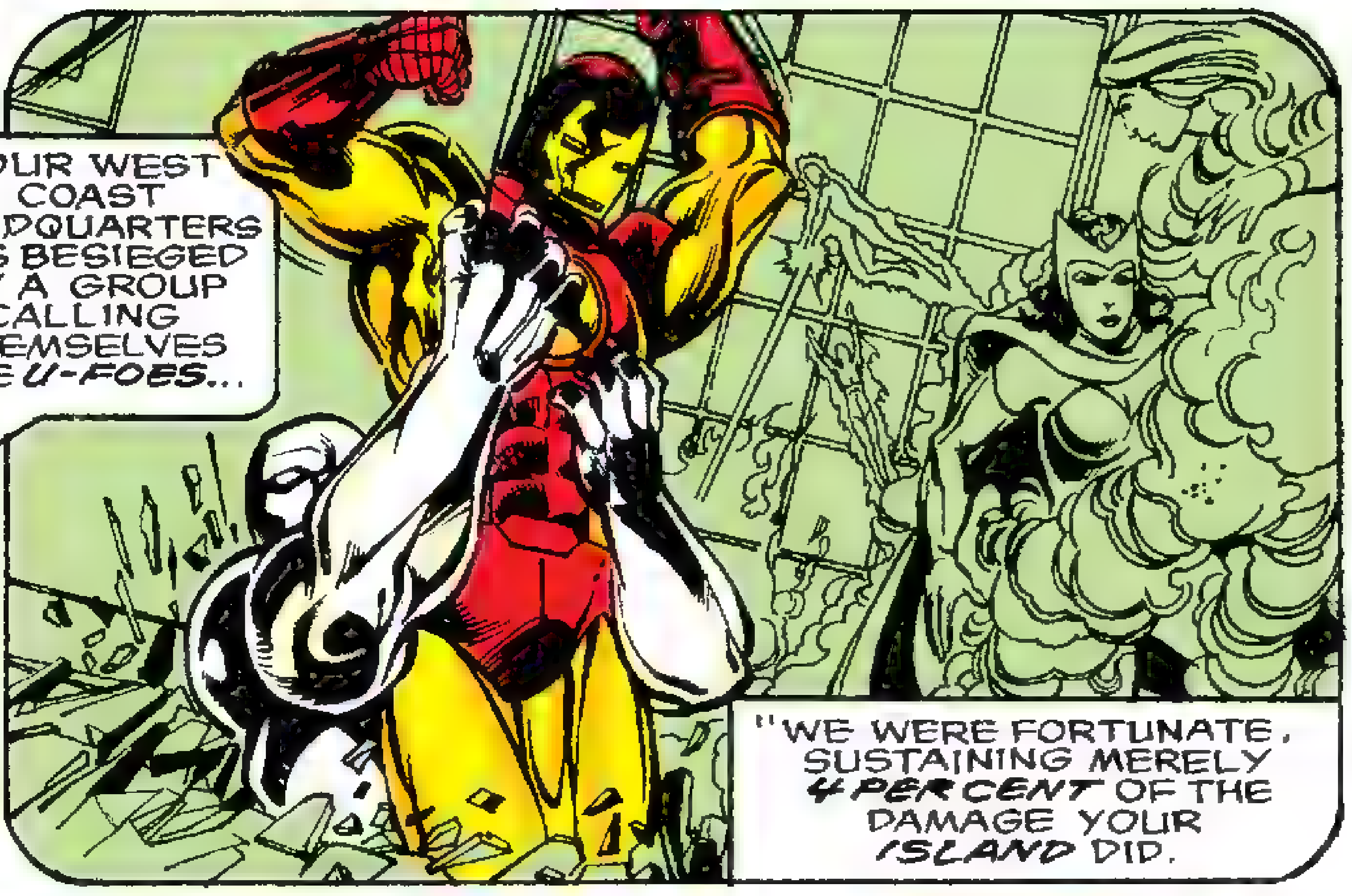

"BY THEN, ALL THE ***RESERVE MEMBERS*** EXCEPT HERCULES HAD BEEN CONTACTED AND GATHERED AT THE TIP OF MANHATTAN TO WATCH OVER THE ***SALVAGE OPERATION***...
"THEY MANAGED TO SUBDUE THE ***ANDROID***.

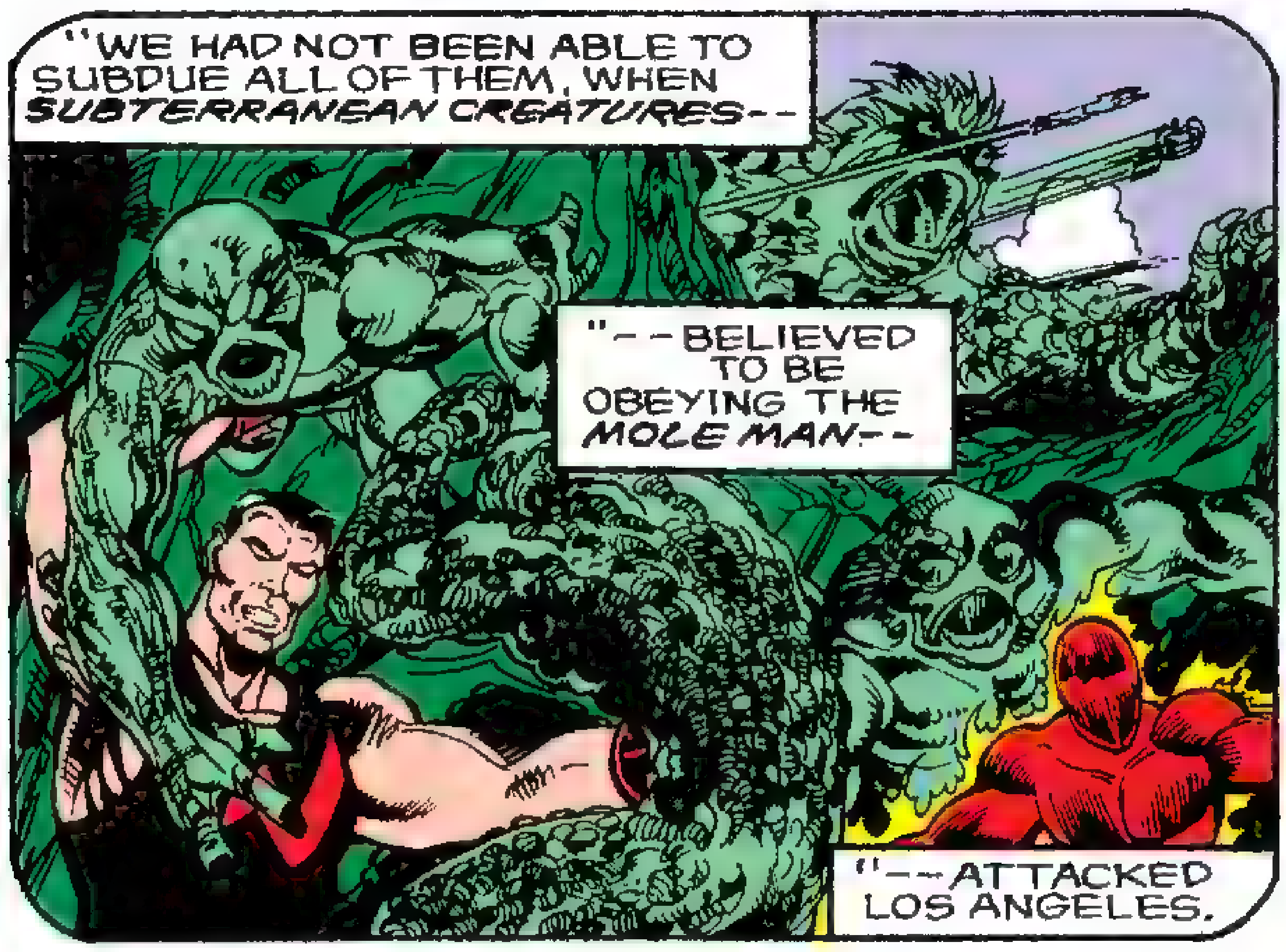

"THAT WAS WHEN SECURITY CHIEF ***O'BRIEN*** AND I UNSEALED THE ABANDONED SUB-BASEMENTS OF OUR ***OLD MANSION*** TO TRY TO SET UP SHOP DOWN THERE...
"FOR A FEW DAYS WE ALL HAD OUR HANDS FULL ***DISASSEMBLING, MOVING***, AND ***REASSEMBLING*** THE ***VITAL EQUIPMENT*** SALVAGED FROM THE ISLAND--
"--AND GETTING OUR SUBTERRANEAN FACILITY ***UP AND RUNNING*** AGAIN. WITH ALL THE ***OTHER*** CRISES KEEPING US CORE MEMBERS RUNNING AROUND, THE ***SUPPORT CREW*** AND ***RESERVES*** DID AN ***INCREDIBLE*** JOB.

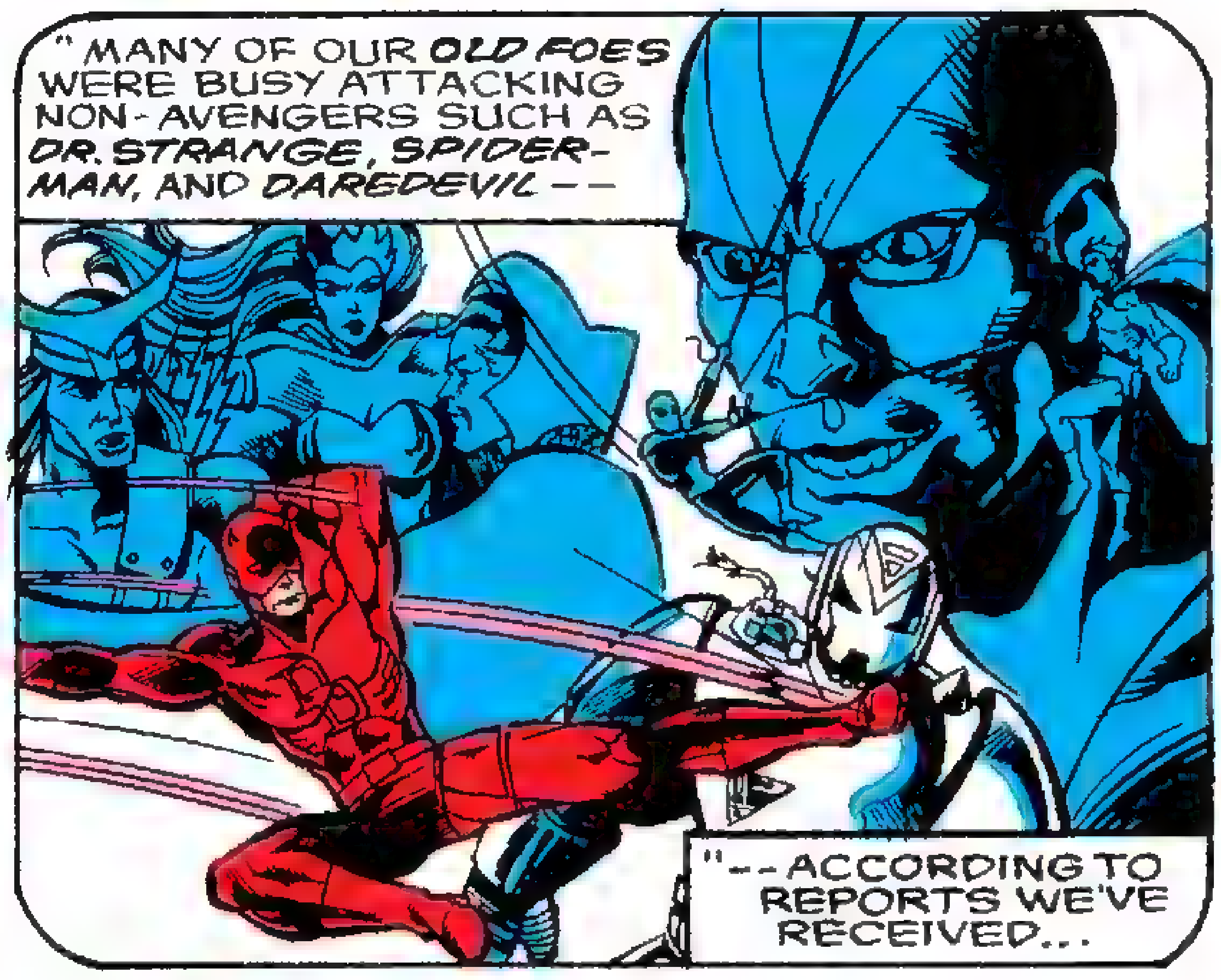

"WE HAD NO SOONER ***REMOVED*** EVERYTHING FROM OUR SUNKEN ISLAND AND REASSIGNED THOSE GUARDING IT TO ***OTHER*** DUTIES WHEN NAMOR SHOWED UP LOOKING FOR US--
"--AND WAS INSTEAD MET BY THE ***CONTROLLER***, WORKING IN THE SKULL'S EMPLOY. THE ***SLAVE-DISC*** HE TAGGED SUBBY WITH PUT HIM UNDER THE CONTROLLER'S CONTROL.

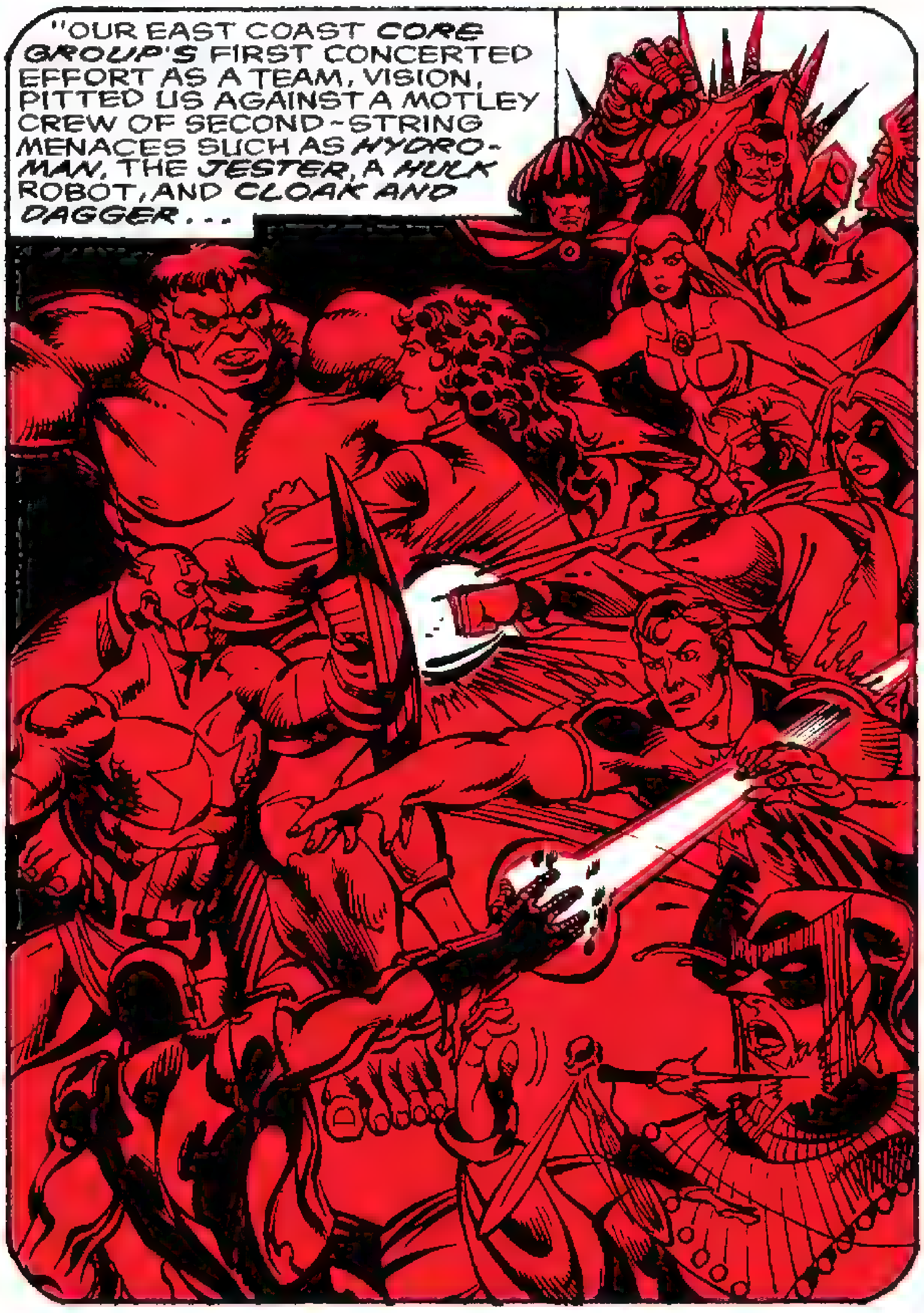

"IT MUST HAVE BEEN SOMEWHERE AROUND THAT TIME THAT LOKI'S HANDPICKED JIHAD OF *TOP CRIMINAL MASTERMINDS* MET FOR THE FIRST TIME.
"ACCORDING TO THE *WIZARD*, NO *COURSE OF ACTION* COULD BE AGREED UPON AT THIS FIRST MEETING...
"...AND IT WAS ALL LOKI COULD DO TO KEEP THE PROCEEDINGS FROM BEING TORN APART BY *POSTURING* AND *BICKERING*...
"*WE* HAD NO INKLING OF THIS *CONSPIRACY* JUST YET.
"I WAS VERY BUSY WITH THE MENTALLY-ENSLAVED *SUB-MARINER* AND THE *CONTROLLER*...
"YOU, THOR, HAD THE *JUGGERNAUT'S* RAMPAGE TO STOP...
"...WHILE *QUASAR* TOOK ON YOUR OLD FOE, THE *ABSORBING MAN*.
"ON THE WEST COAST, *IRON MAN* TACKLED STILL *ANOTHER* OF YOUR SPARRING PARTNERS, THOR--THE *WRECKER*--
"*HAWKEYE* FACED *BOOMERANG* AND LATER ANGAR THE SCREAMER AND SCREAMING MIMI...
"...WHILE *CAPTAIN MARVEL* STOPPED THE SOUND MASTER *KLAW*, WHO HAD ELUDED QUASAR A DAY BEFORE...
"THE COMMON DENOMINATOR IN ALL THIS SEEMED TO BE SQUARE-OFFS AGAINST FOES WE'D NEVER *FACED* BEFORE. THAT WAS APPARENTLY *LOKI'S* BIG STRATAGEM.

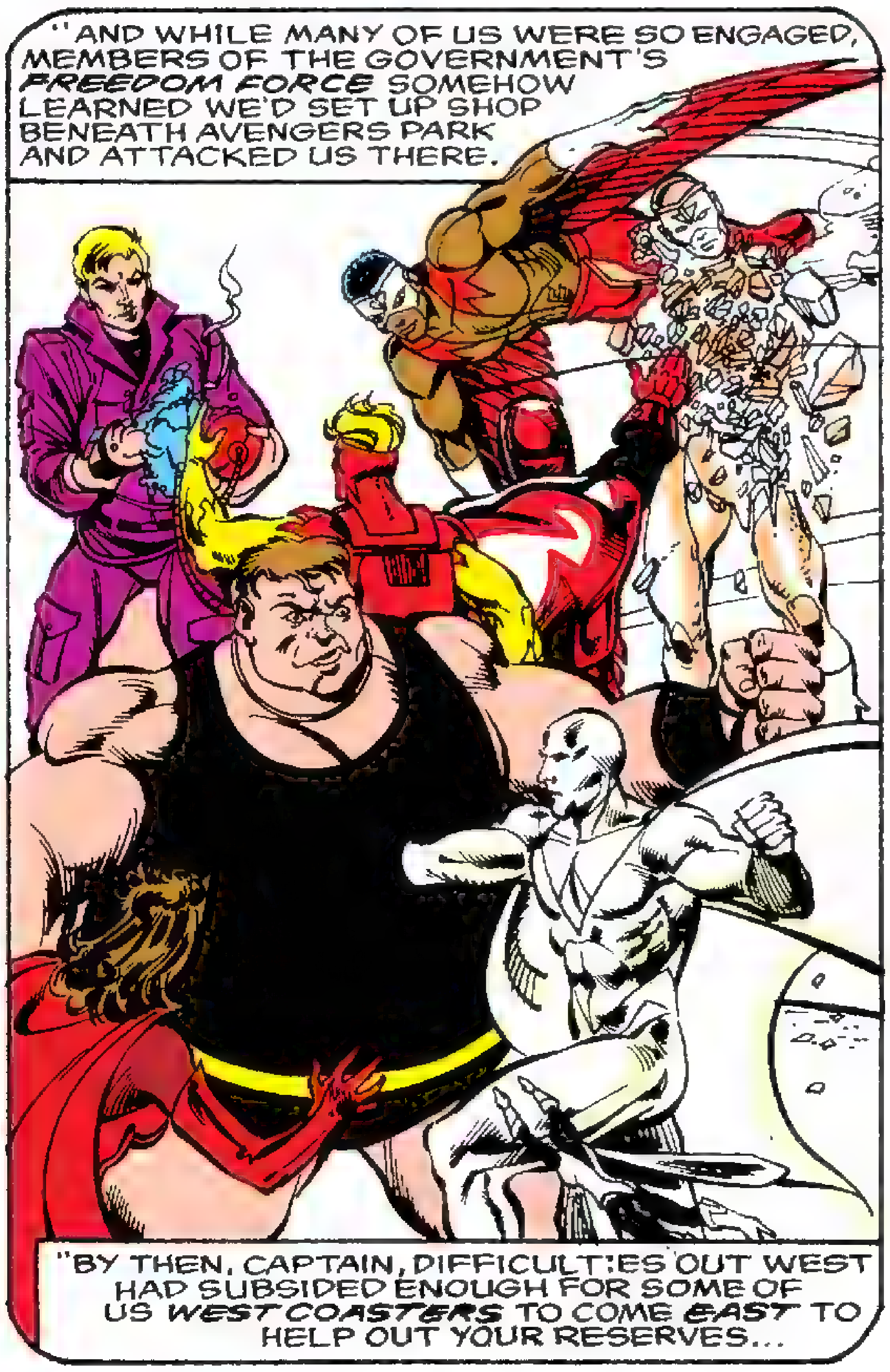

AT THIS POINT LET ME PUT ON RECORD THE ACTIVITIES OF THE *WEST COAST* BRANCH OF THIS ORGANIZATION--
--AMONG WHOSE RANKS *I* WAS THEN COUNTED--
--SO THAT IT IS CLEAR WHY WE WERE UNABLE TO RENDER YOU MUCH IN THE WAY OF *ASSISTANCE* DURING THE DEVASTATING EVENTS YOU HAVE SO FAR CHRONICLED...
OUR WEST COAST HEADQUARTERS WAS BESIEGED BY A GROUP CALLING THEMSELVES THE *U-FOES*...

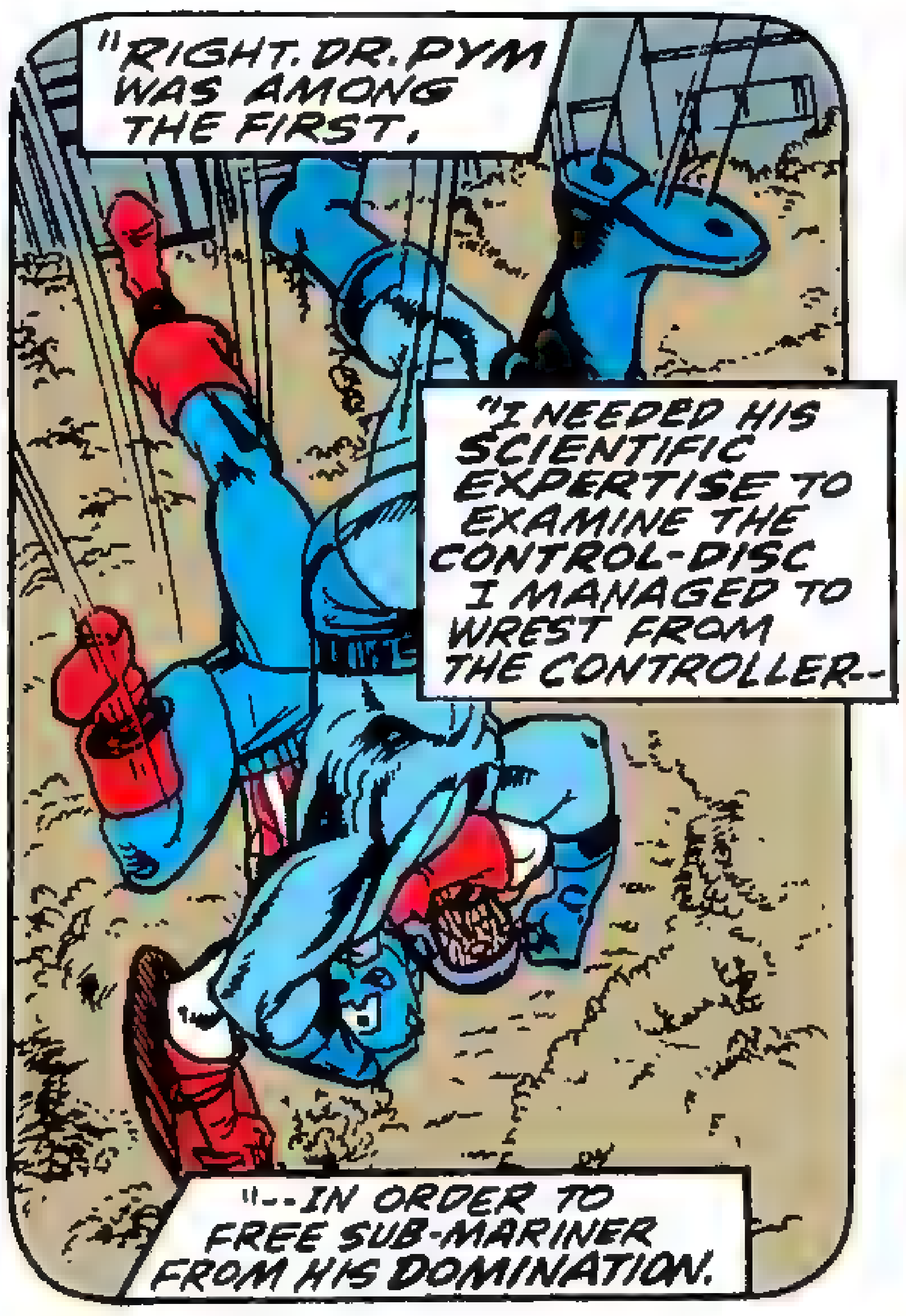

"WE WERE FORTUNATE, SUSTAINING MERELY *4 PER CENT* OF THE DAMAGE YOUR *ISLAND* DID.

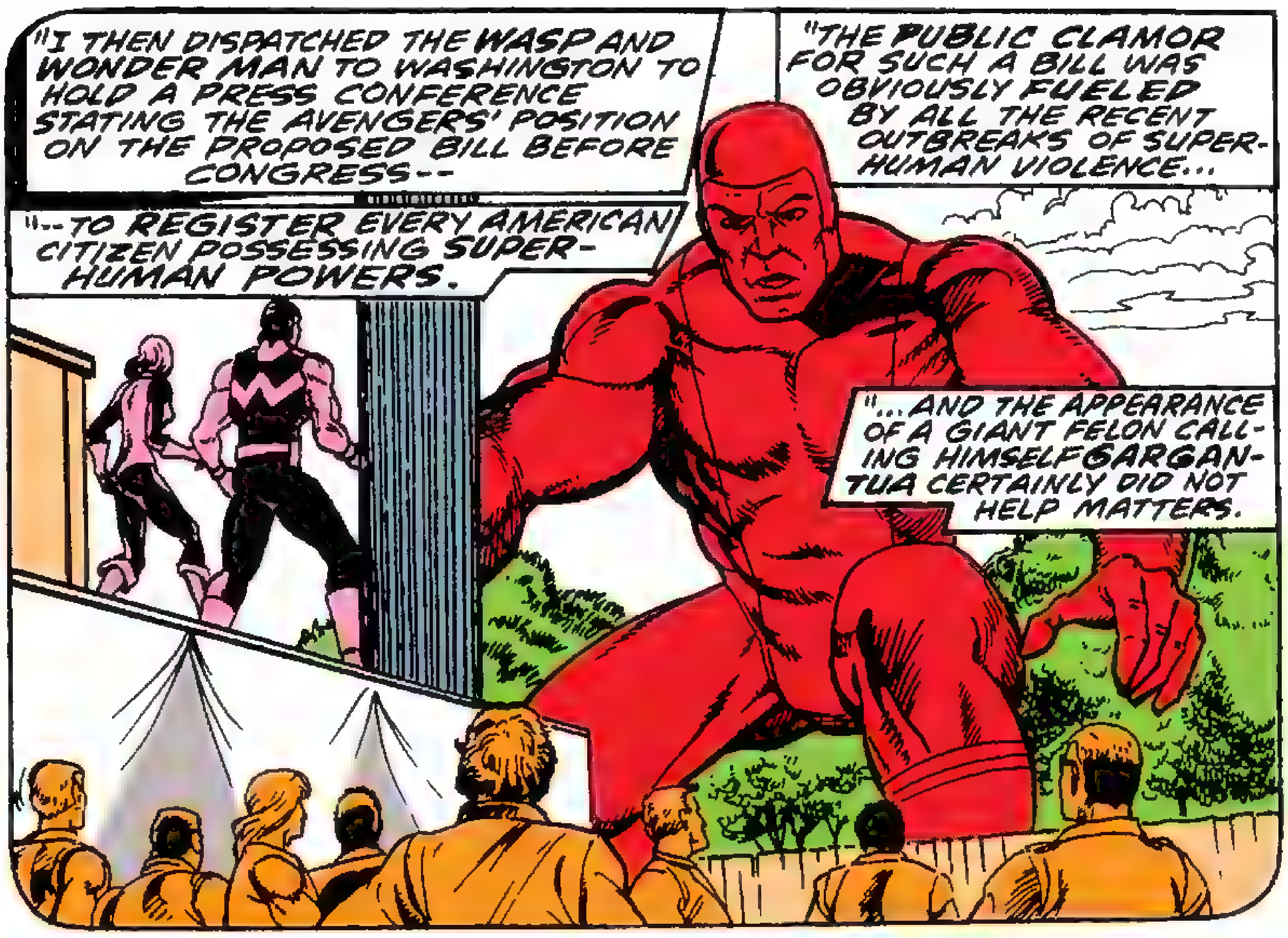

"WE HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO SUBDUE ALL OF THEM, WHEN *SUBTERRANEAN CREATURES*--
"--BELIEVED TO BE OBEYING THE *MOLE MAN*--
"--ATTACKED LOS ANGELES.

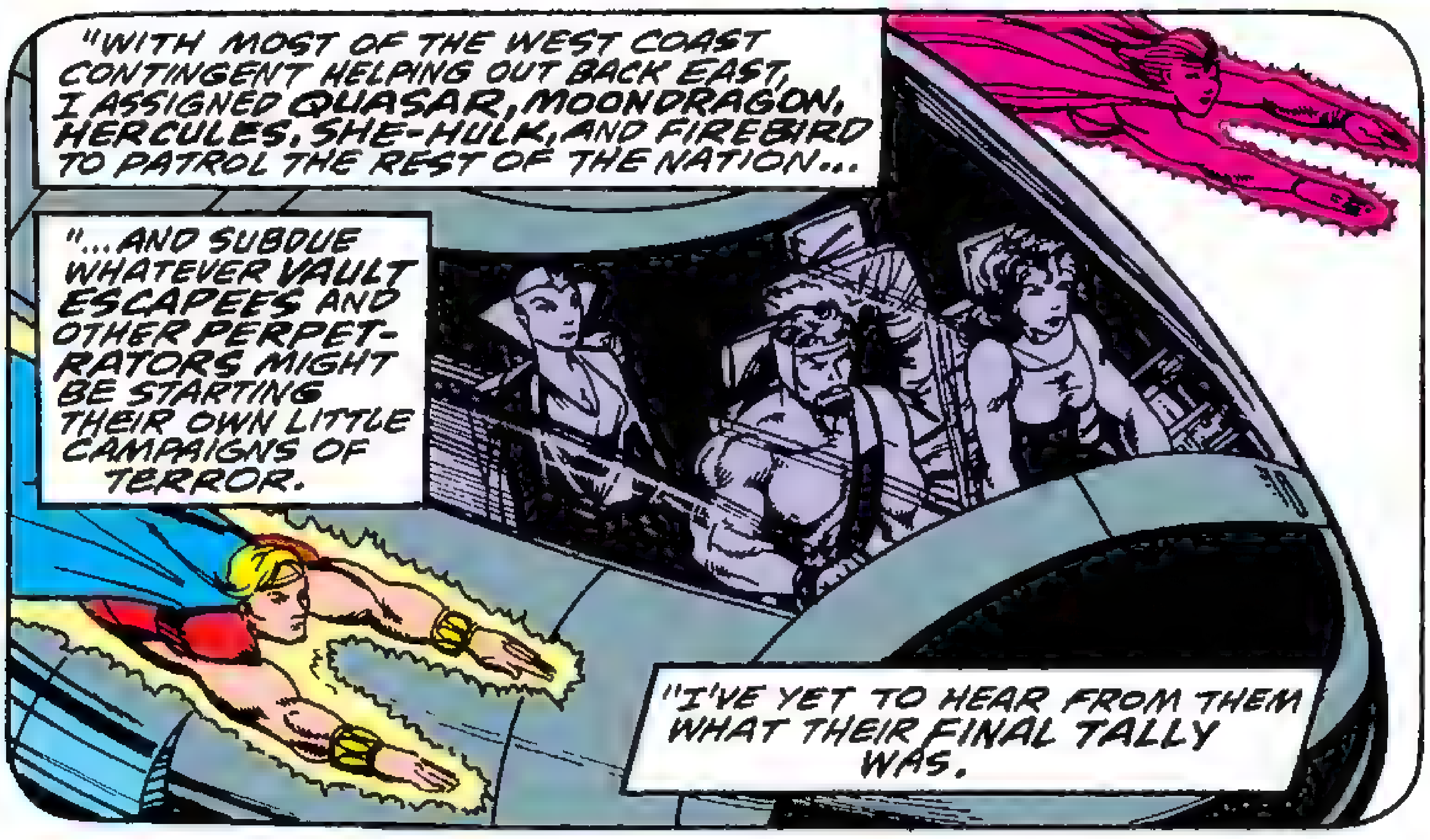

"MANY OF OUR *OLD FOES* WERE BUSY ATTACKING NON-AVENGERS SUCH AS *DR. STRANGE, SPIDER-MAN,* AND *DAREDEVIL*--
"--ACCORDING TO REPORTS WE'VE RECEIVED...

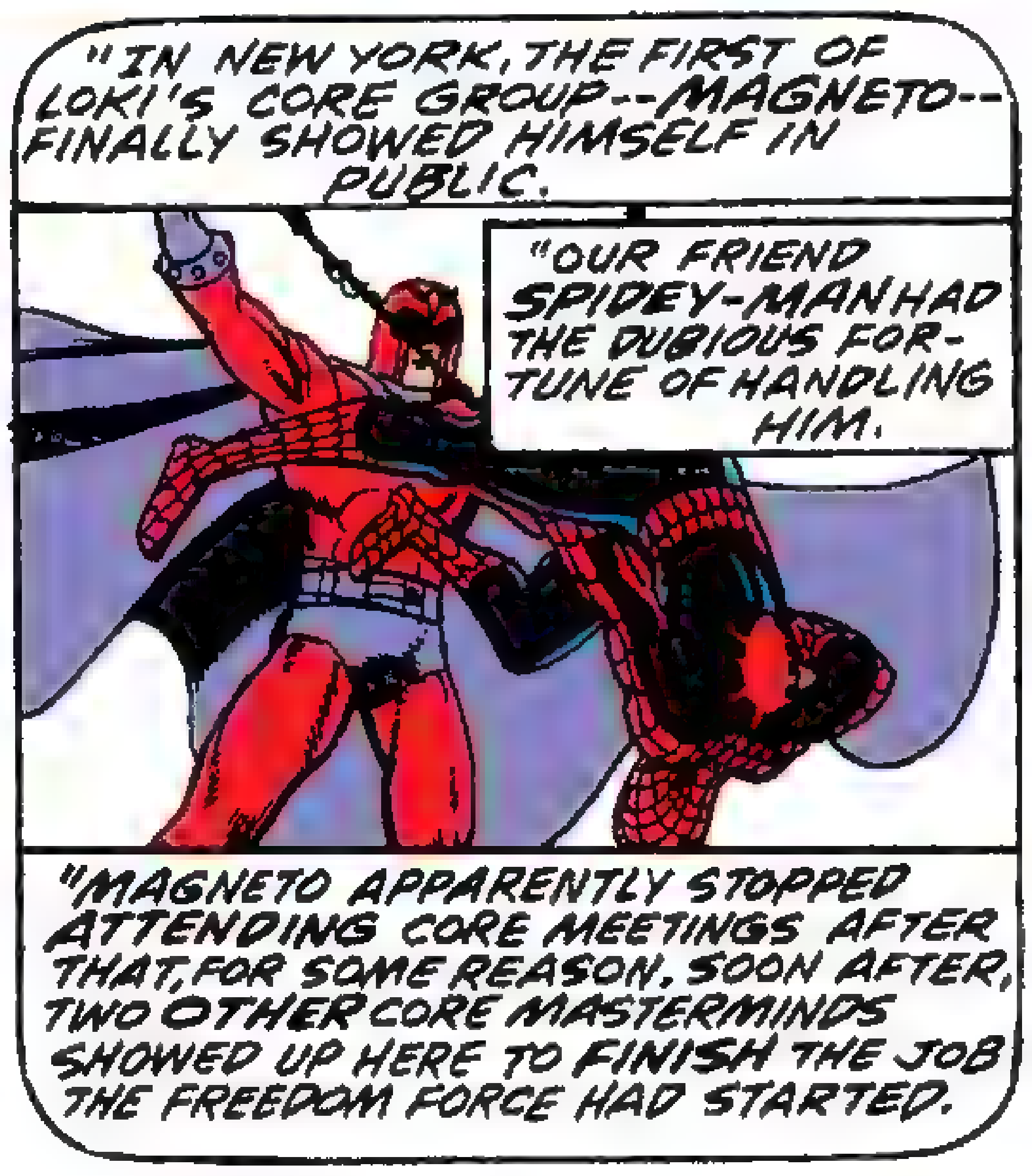

"OUR EAST COAST *CORE GROUP'S* FIRST CONCERTED EFFORT AS A TEAM, VISION, PITTED US AGAINST A MOTLEY CREW OF SECOND-STRING MENACES SUCH AS *HYDRO-MAN,* THE *JESTER,* A *HULK* ROBOT, AND *CLOAK AND DAGGER*...

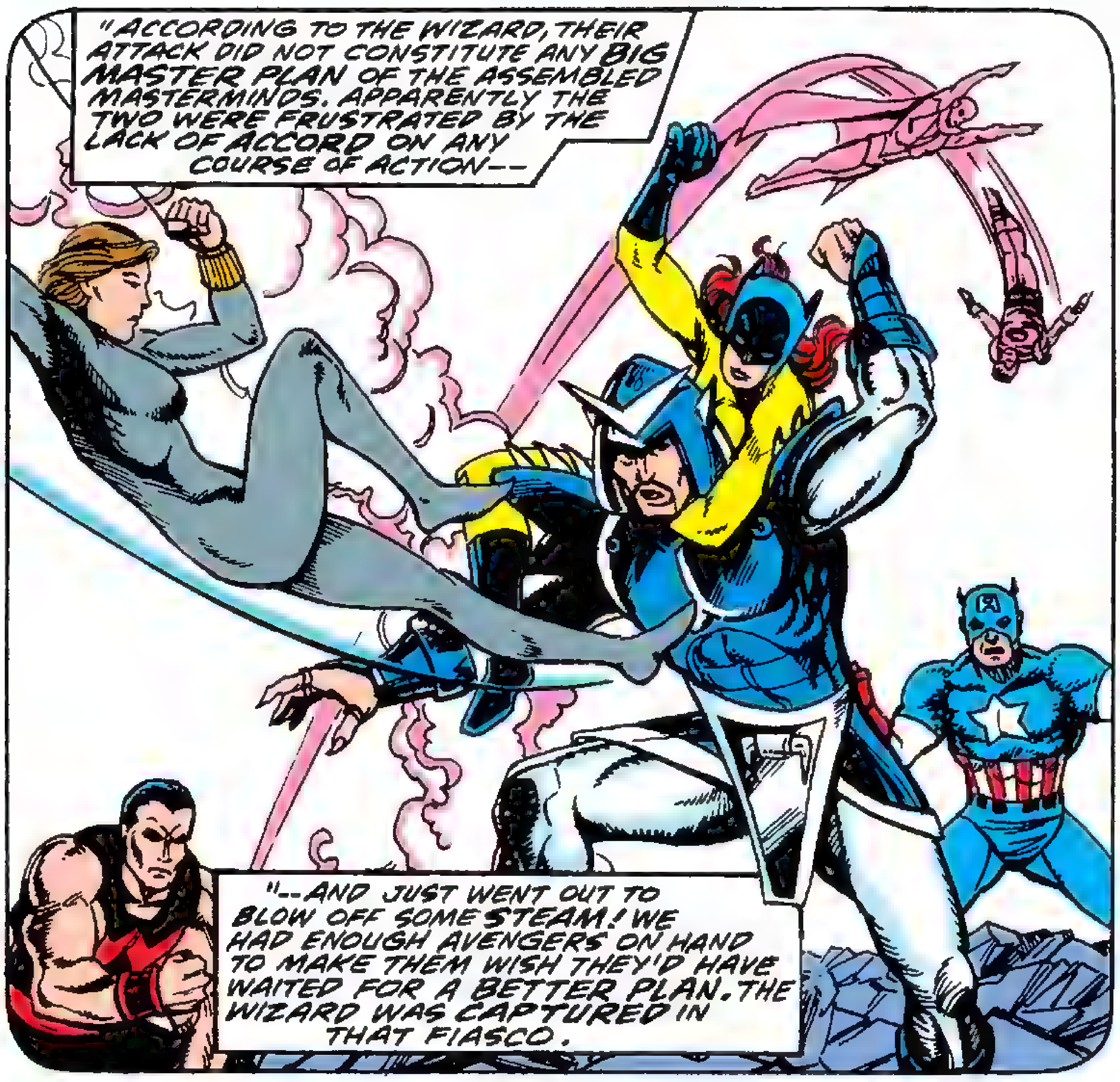

"AND WHILE MANY OF US WERE SO ENGAGED, MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT'S *FREEDOM FORCE* SOMEHOW LEARNED WE'D SET UP SHOP BENEATH AVENGERS PARK AND ATTACKED US THERE.
"BY THEN, CAPTAIN, DIFFICULTIES OUT WEST HAD SUBSIDED ENOUGH FOR SOME OF US *WEST COASTERS* TO COME *EAST* TO HELP OUT YOUR RESERVES...

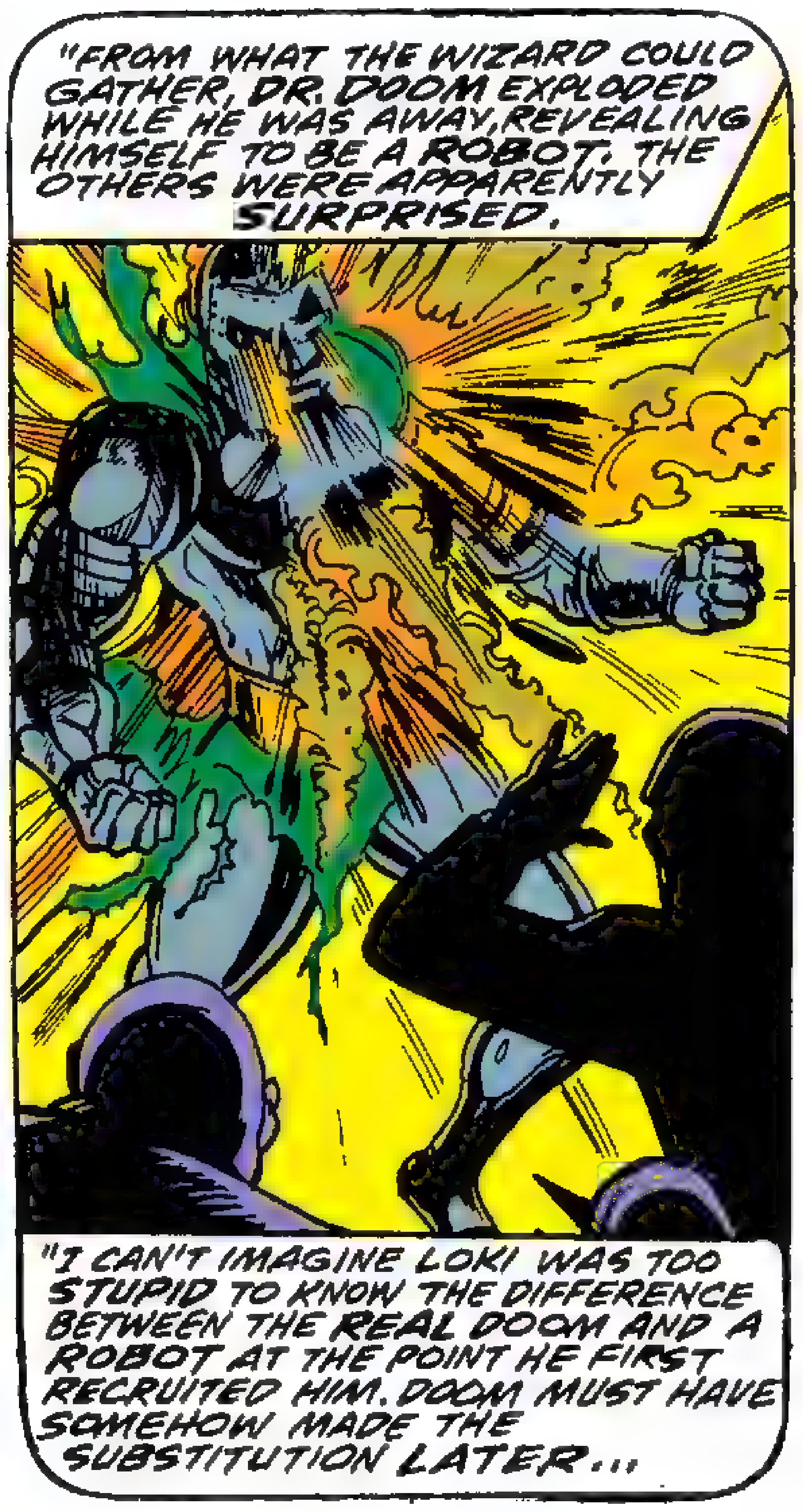

"RIGHT. DR. PYM WAS AMONG THE FIRST.
"I NEEDED HIS SCIENTIFIC EXPERTISE TO EXAMINE THE CONTROL-DISC I MANAGED TO WREST FROM THE CONTROLLER--
"--IN ORDER TO FREE SUB-MARINER FROM HIS DOMINATION.

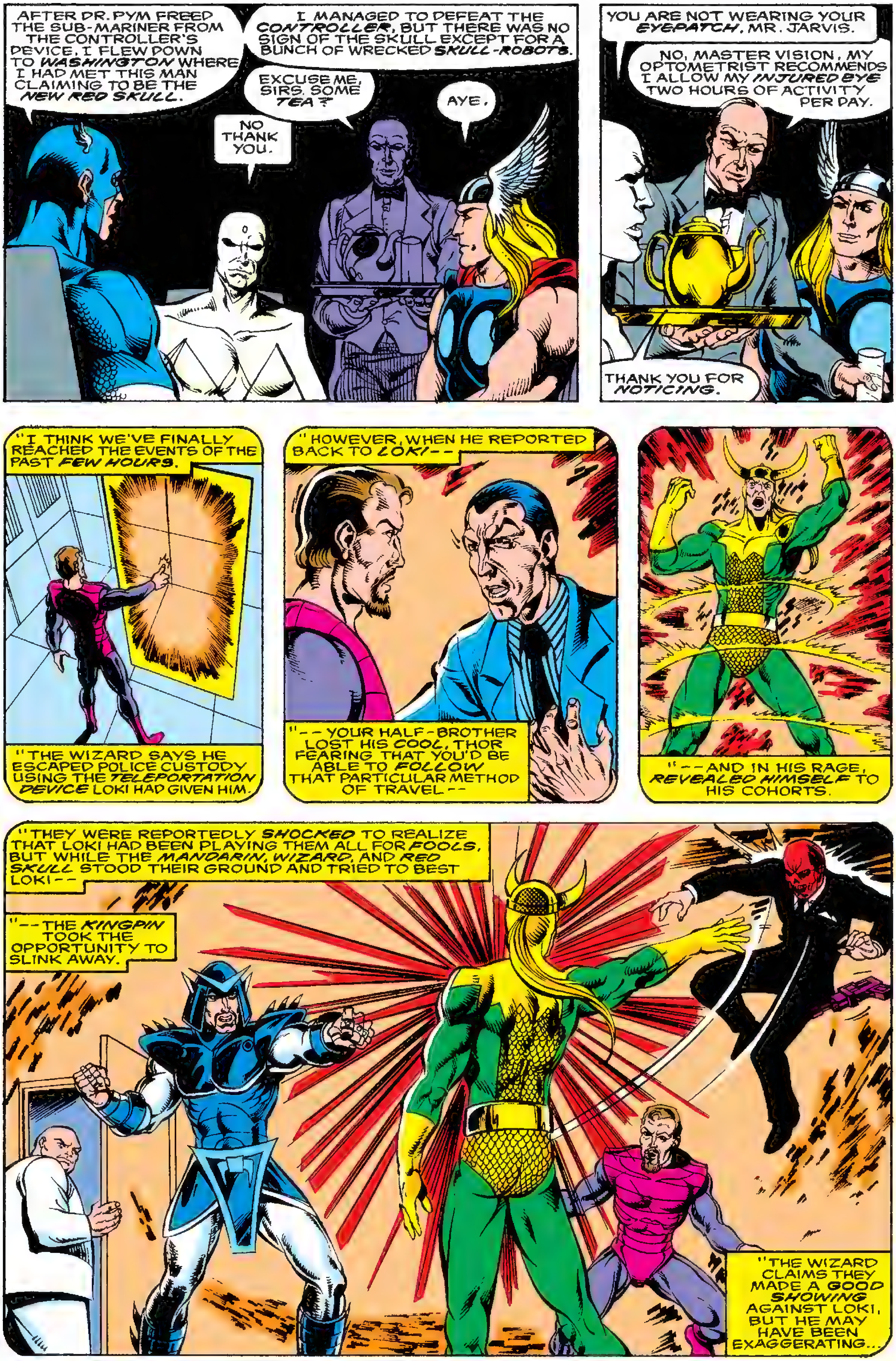

"I THEN DISPATCHED THE WASP AND WONDER MAN TO WASHINGTON TO HOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE STATING THE AVENGERS' POSITION ON THE PROPOSED BILL BEFORE CONGRESS--
"--TO REGISTER EVERY AMERICAN CITIZEN POSSESSING SUPER-HUMAN POWERS.
"THE PUBLIC CLAMOR FOR SUCH A BILL WAS OBVIOUSLY FUELED BY ALL THE RECENT OUTBREAKS OF SUPER-HUMAN VIOLENCE...
"...AND THE APPEARANCE OF A GIANT FELON CALLING HIMSELF GARGANTUA CERTAINLY DID NOT HELP MATTERS.

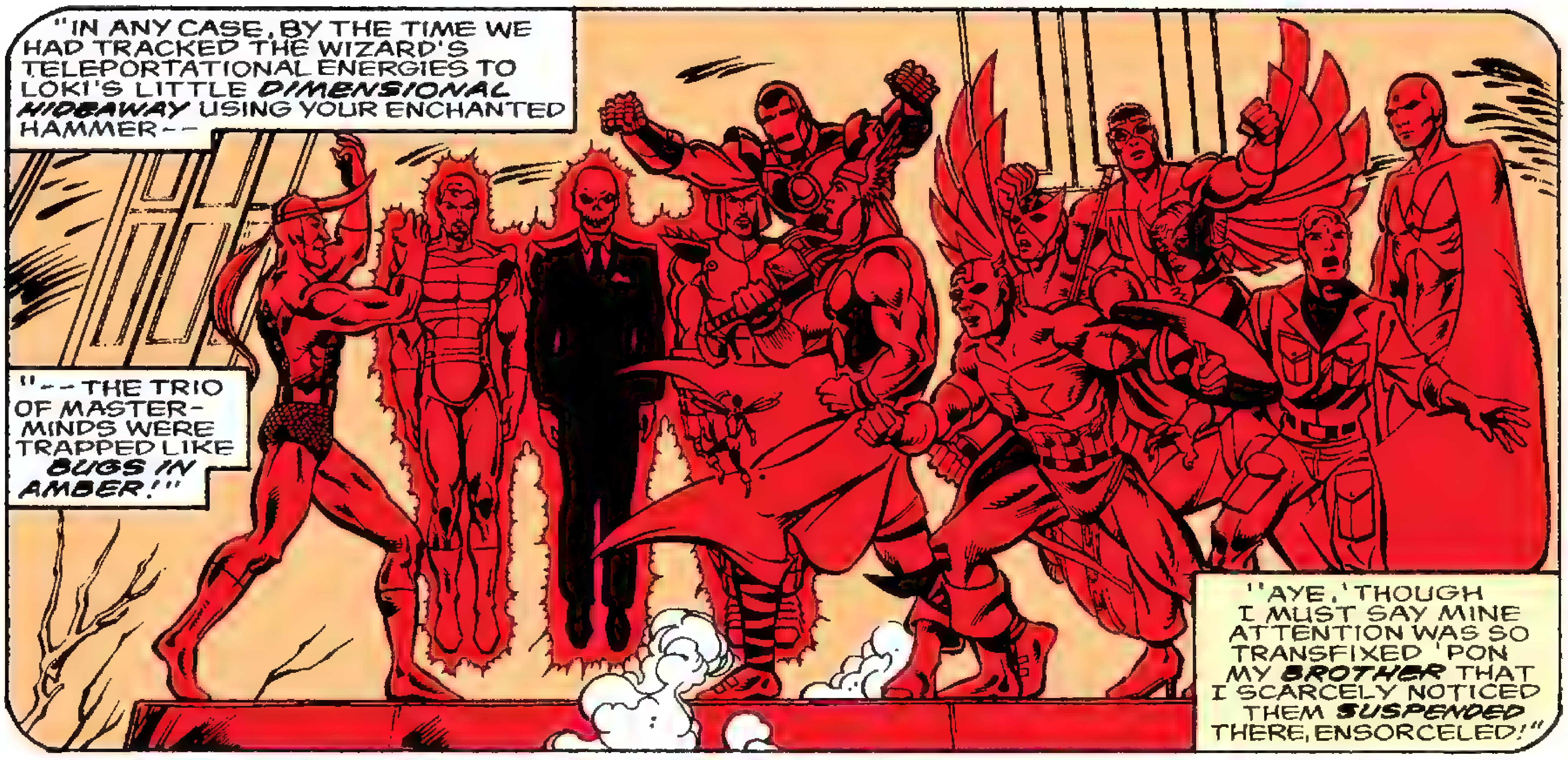

"WITH MOST OF THE WEST COAST CONTINGENT HELPING OUT BACK EAST, I ASSIGNED QUASAR, MOONDRAGON, HERCULES, SHE-HULK, AND FIREBIRD TO PATROL THE REST OF THE NATION...
"...AND SUBDUE WHATEVER VAULT ESCAPEES AND OTHER PERPETRATORS MIGHT BE STARTING THEIR OWN LITTLE CAMPAIGNS OF TERROR.
"I'VE YET TO HEAR FROM THEM WHAT THEIR FINAL TALLY WAS.

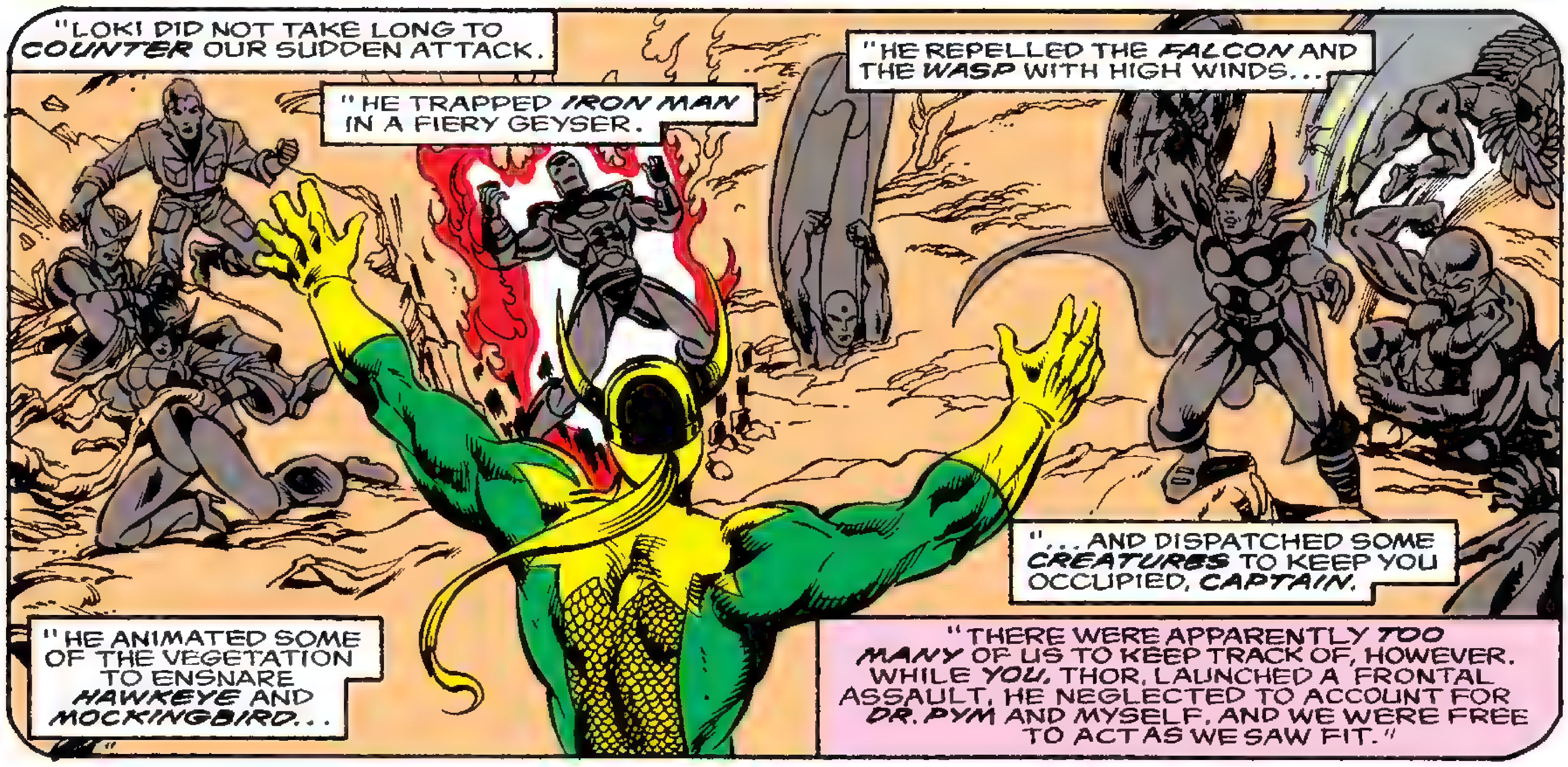

"IN NEW YORK, THE FIRST OF LOKI'S CORE GROUP--MAGNETO--FINALLY SHOWED HIMSELF IN PUBLIC.
"OUR FRIEND SPIDEY-MAN HAD THE DUBIOUS FORTUNE OF HANDLING HIM.
"MAGNETO APPARENTLY STOPPED ATTENDING CORE MEETINGS AFTER THAT, FOR SOME REASON. SOON AFTER, TWO OTHER CORE MASTERMINDS SHOWED UP HERE TO FINISH THE JOB THE FREEDOM FORCE HAD STARTED.

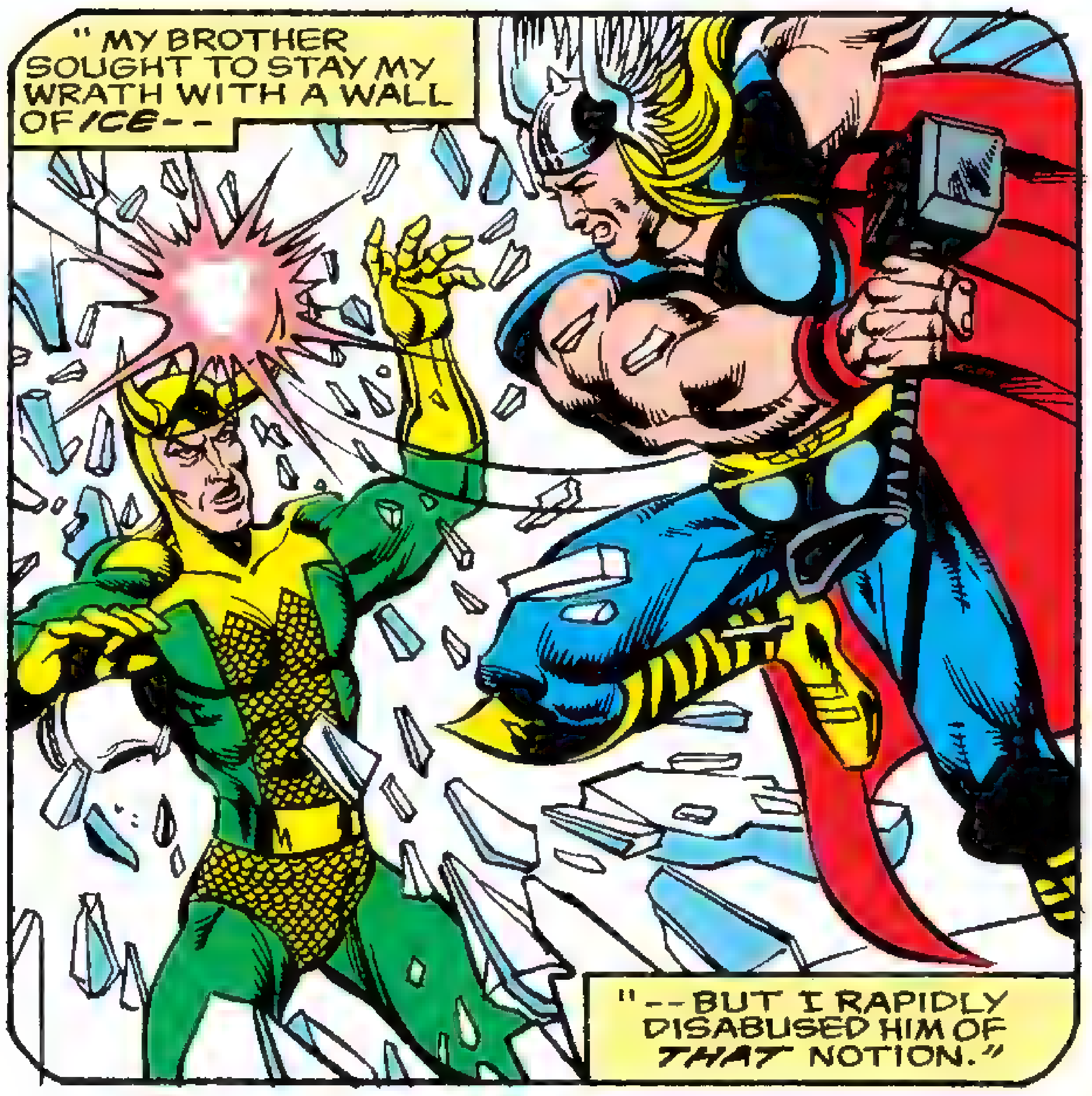

"ACCORDING TO THE WIZARD, THEIR ATTACK DID NOT CONSTITUTE ANY BIG MASTER PLAN OF THE ASSEMBLED MASTERMINDS. APPARENTLY THE TWO WERE FRUSTRATED BY THE LACK OF ACCORD ON ANY COURSE OF ACTION--
"--AND JUST WENT OUT TO BLOW OFF SOME STEAM! WE HAD ENOUGH AVENGERS ON HAND TO MAKE THEM WISH THEY'D HAVE WAITED FOR A BETTER PLAN. THE WIZARD WAS CAPTURED IN THAT FIASCO.

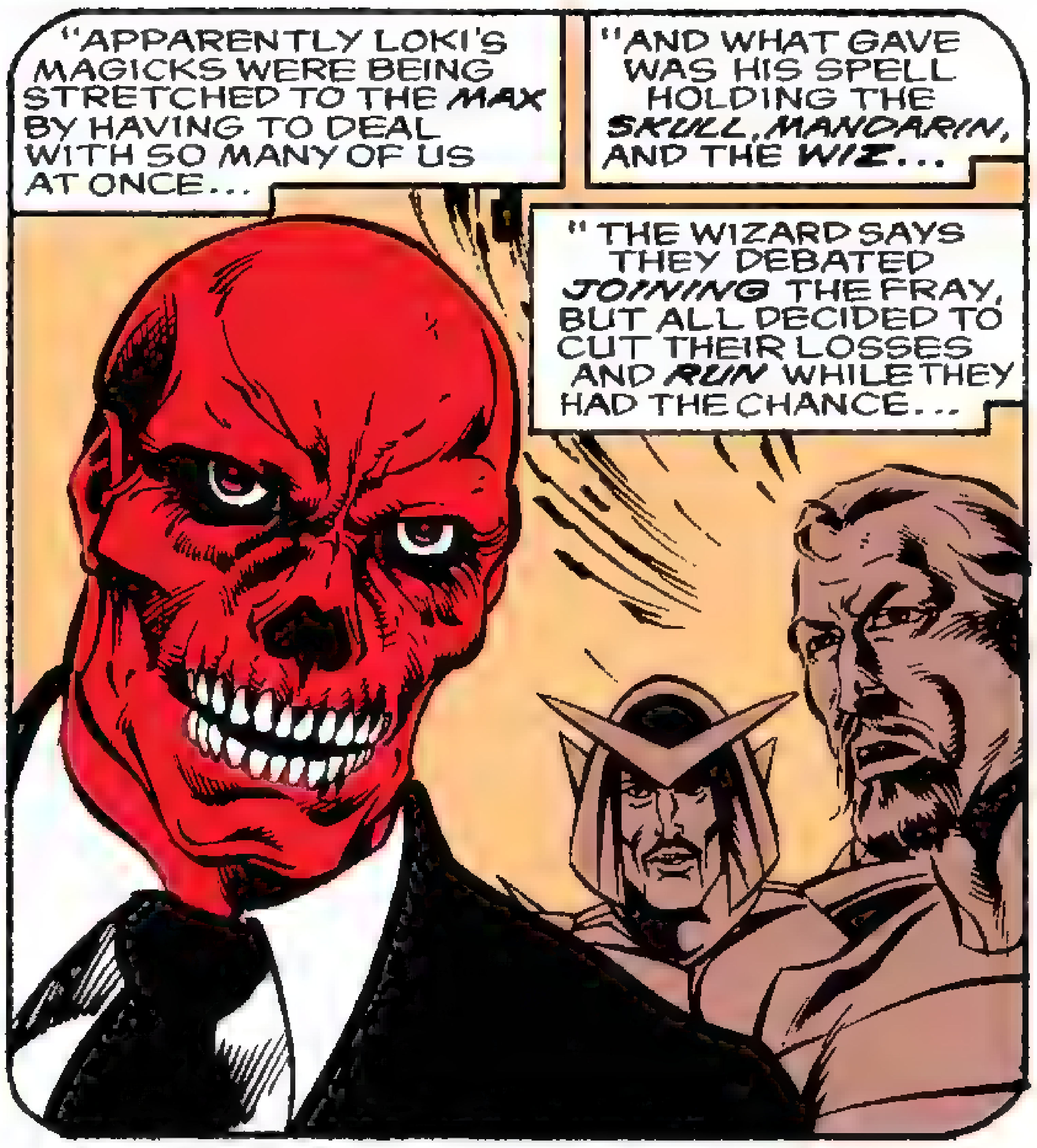

"FROM WHAT THE WIZARD COULD GATHER, DR. DOOM EXPLODED WHILE HE WAS AWAY, REVEALING HIMSELF TO BE A ROBOT. THE OTHERS WERE APPARENTLY SURPRISED.
"I CAN'T IMAGINE LOKI WAS TOO STUPID TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE REAL DOOM AND A ROBOT AT THE POINT HE FIRST RECRUITED HIM. DOOM MUST HAVE SOMEHOW MADE THE SUBSTITUTION LATER...

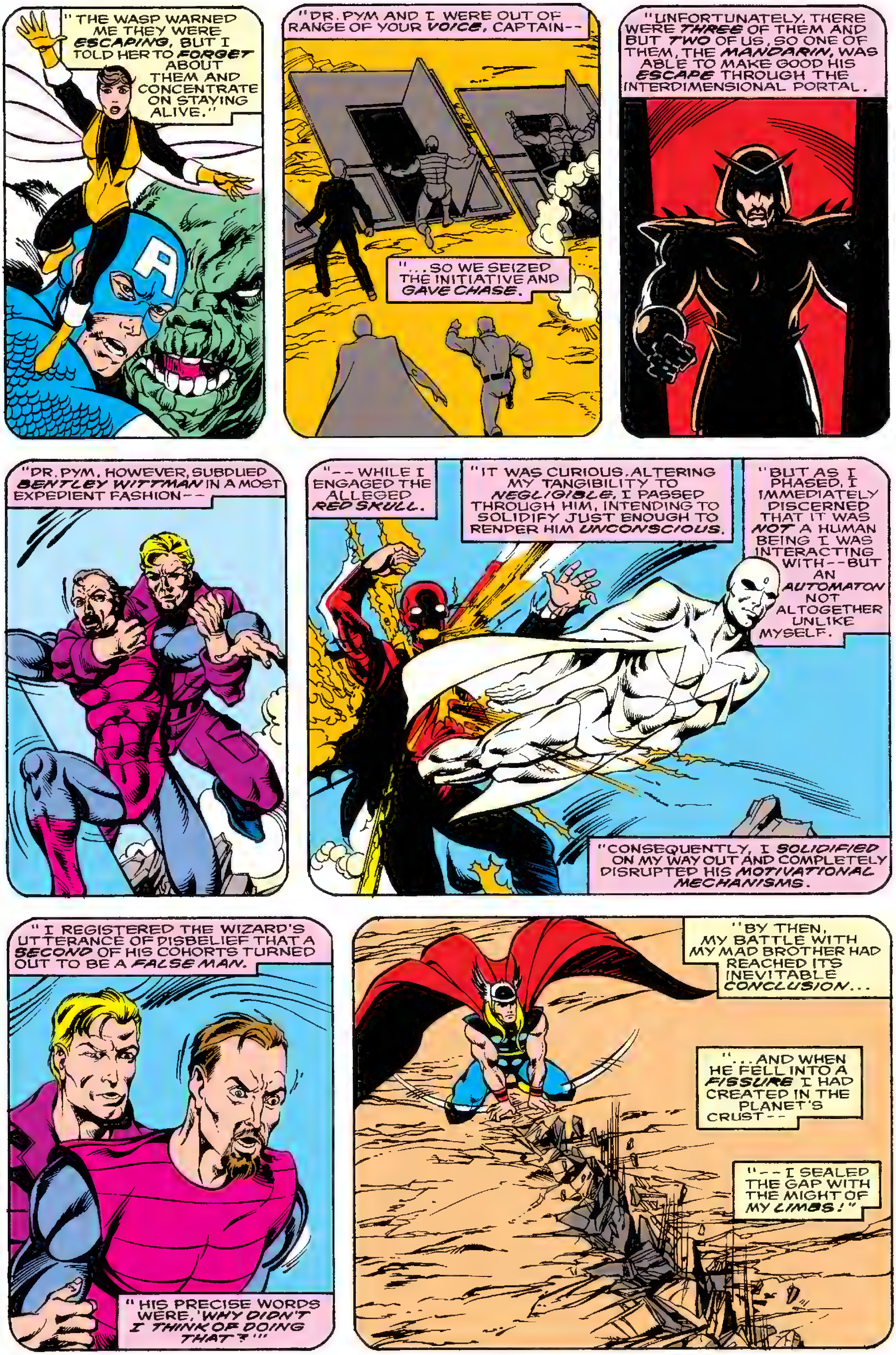

AFTER DR. PYM FREED THE SUB-MARINER FROM THE CONTROLLER'S DEVICE, I FLEW DOWN TO *WASHINGTON* WHERE I HAD MET THIS MAN CLAIMING TO BE THE *NEW RED SKULL*.
I MANAGED TO DEFEAT THE *CONTROLLER*, BUT THERE WAS NO SIGN OF THE SKULL EXCEPT FOR A BUNCH OF WRECKED *SKULL-ROBOTS*.
EXCUSE ME, SIRS. SOME *TEA*?
NO THANK YOU.
AYE.
YOU ARE NOT WEARING YOUR *EYEPATCH*, MR. JARVIS.
NO, MASTER VISION, MY OPTOMETRIST RECOMMENDS I ALLOW MY *INJURED EYE* TWO HOURS OF ACTIVITY PER DAY.
THANK YOU FOR *NOTICING*.
"I THINK WE'VE FINALLY REACHED THE EVENTS OF THE PAST *FEW HOURS*.
"THE WIZARD SAYS HE ESCAPED POLICE CUSTODY USING THE *TELEPORTATION DEVICE* LOKI HAD GIVEN HIM.
"HOWEVER, WHEN HE REPORTED BACK TO *LOKI*--
"--YOUR HALF-BROTHER LOST HIS *COOL*, THOR FEARING THAT YOU'D BE ABLE TO *FOLLOW* THAT PARTICULAR METHOD OF TRAVEL--
"--AND IN HIS RAGE, *REVEALED HIMSELF* TO HIS COHORTS.
"THEY WERE REPORTEDLY *SHOCKED* TO REALIZE THAT LOKI HAD BEEN PLAYING THEM ALL FOR *FOOLS*, BUT WHILE THE *MANDARIN, WIZARD*, AND *RED SKULL* STOOD THEIR GROUND AND TRIED TO BEST LOKI--
"--THE *KINGPIN* TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY TO SLINK AWAY.
"THE WIZARD CLAIMS THEY MADE A *GOOD SHOWING* AGAINST LOKI, BUT HE MAY HAVE BEEN EXAGGERATING...

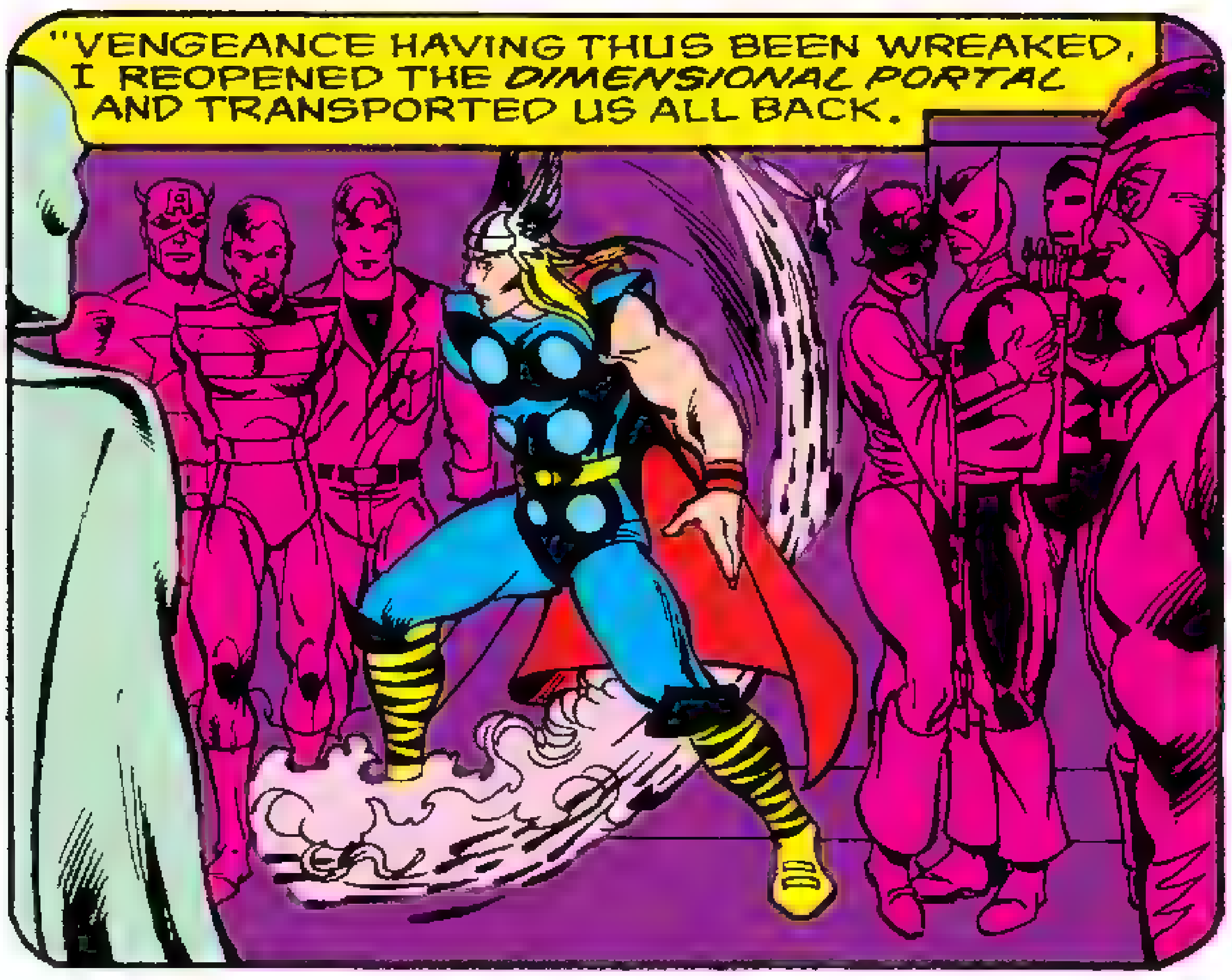

"IN ANY CASE, BY THE TIME WE HAD TRACKED THE WIZARD'S TELEPORTATIONAL ENERGIES TO LOKI'S LITTLE *DIMENSIONAL HIDEAWAY* USING YOUR ENCHANTED HAMMER--
"--THE TRIO OF MASTER-MINDS WERE TRAPPED LIKE *BUGS IN AMBER!*"
"AYE, THOUGH I MUST SAY MINE ATTENTION WAS SO TRANSFIXED 'PON MY *BROTHER* THAT I SCARCELY NOTICED THEM *SUSPENDED* THERE, ENSORCELED!"

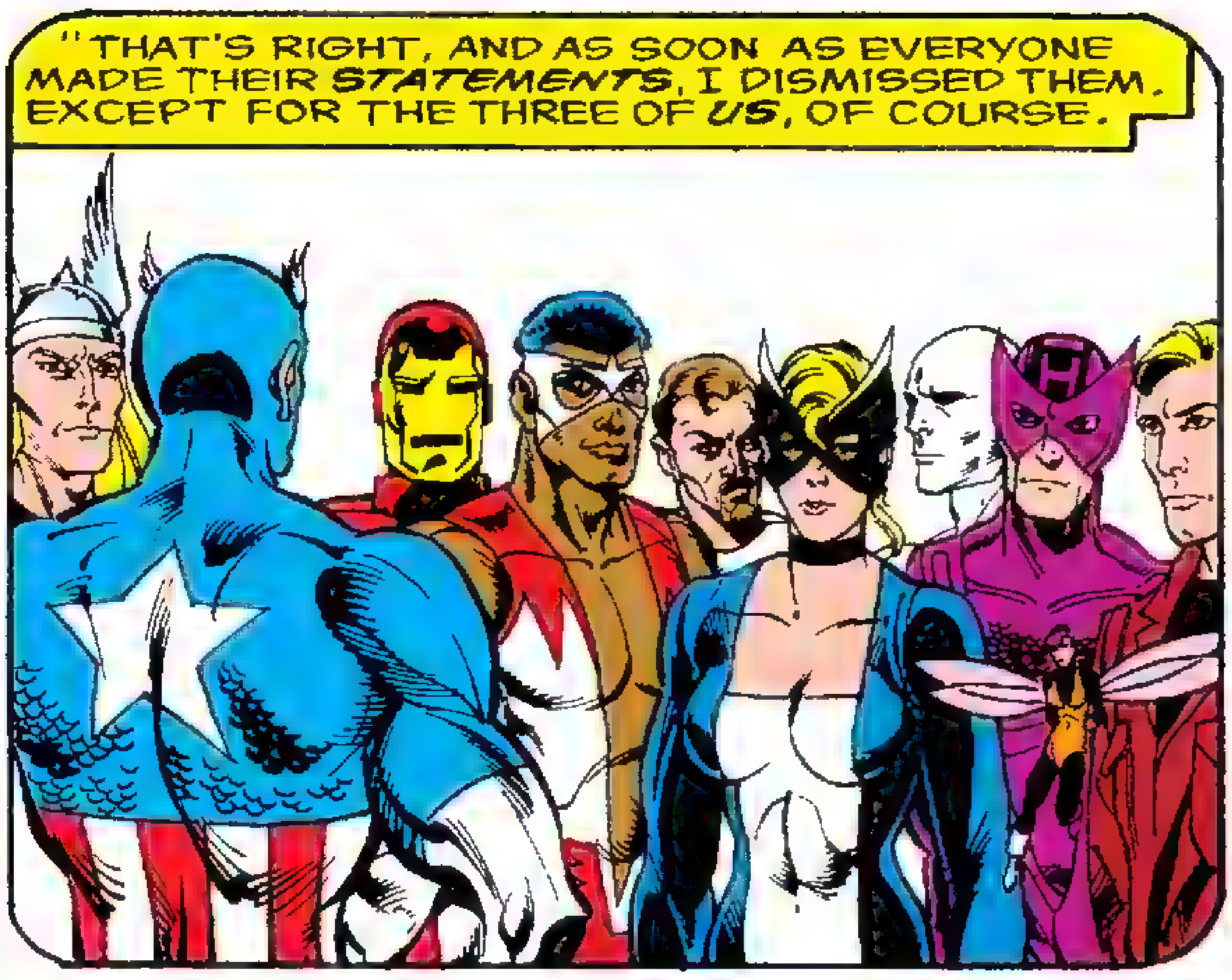

"LOKI DID NOT TAKE LONG TO *COUNTER* OUR SUDDEN ATTACK.
"HE TRAPPED *IRON MAN* IN A FIERY GEYSER.
"HE REPELLED THE *FALCON* AND THE *WASP* WITH HIGH WINDS...
"...AND DISPATCHED SOME *CREATURES* TO KEEP YOU OCCUPIED, *CAPTAIN*.
"HE ANIMATED SOME OF THE VEGETATION TO ENSNARE *HAWKEYE* AND *MOCKINGBIRD*..."
"THERE WERE APPARENTLY *TOO MANY* OF US TO KEEP TRACK OF, HOWEVER. WHILE *YOU*, THOR, LAUNCHED A FRONTAL ASSAULT, HE NEGLECTED TO ACCOUNT FOR *DR. PYM* AND MYSELF, AND WE WERE FREE TO ACT AS WE SAW FIT."

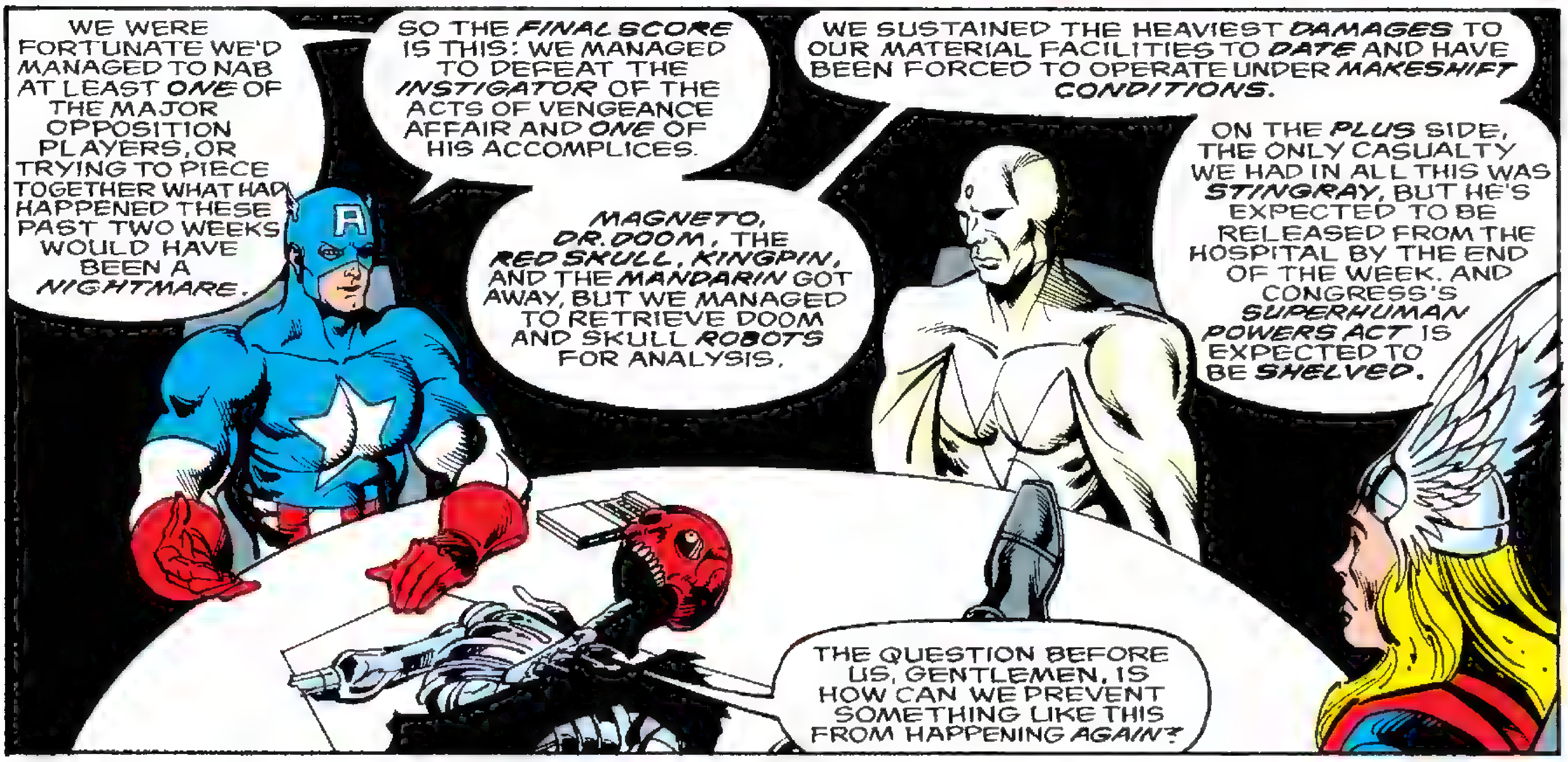

"MY BROTHER SOUGHT TO STAY MY WRATH WITH A WALL OF *ICE*--
"--BUT I RAPIDLY DISABUSED HIM OF *THAT* NOTION."

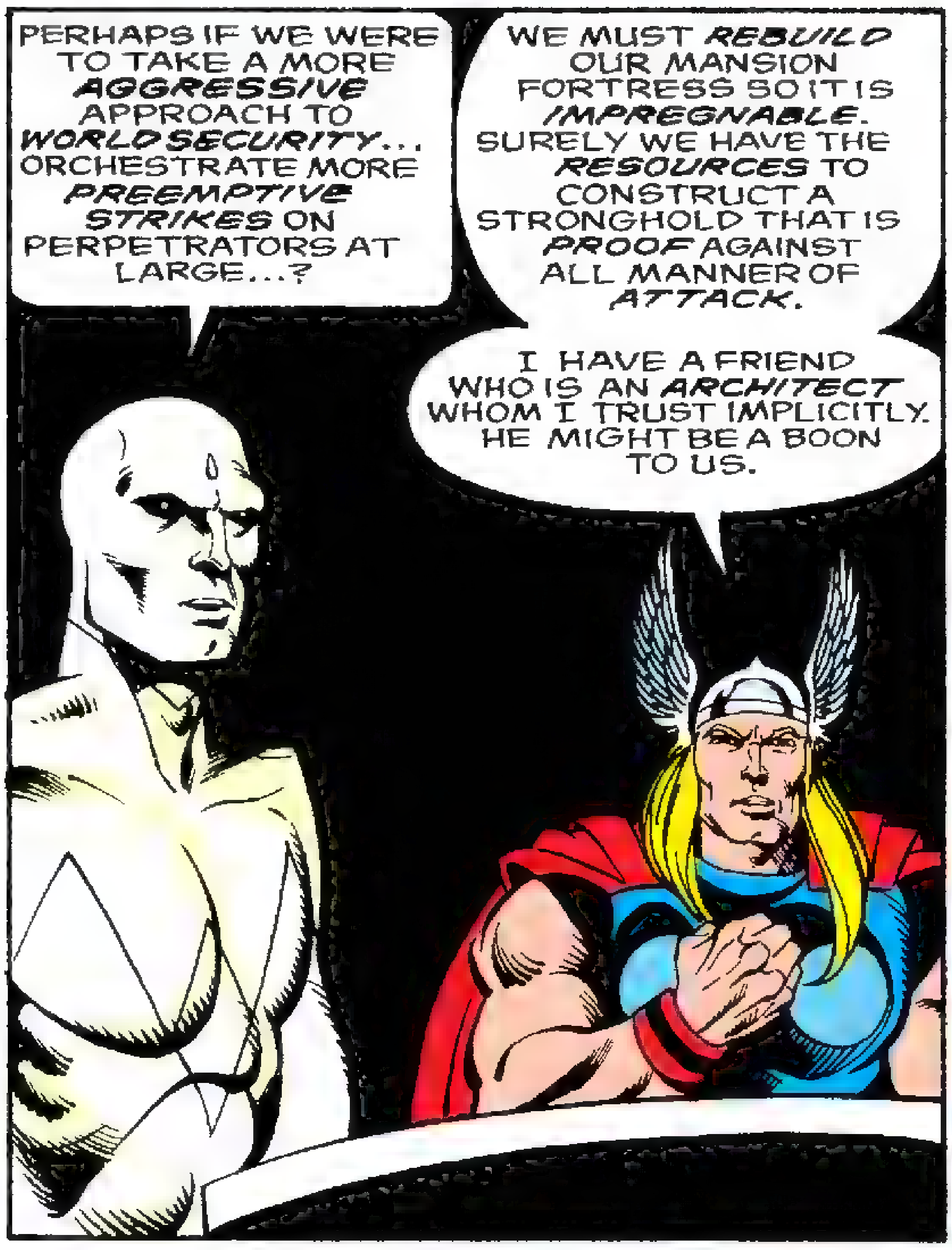

"APPARENTLY LOKI'S MAGICKS WERE BEING STRETCHED TO THE *MAX* BY HAVING TO DEAL WITH SO MANY OF US AT ONCE...
"AND WHAT GAVE WAS HIS SPELL HOLDING THE *SKULL, MANDARIN,* AND THE *WIZ*...
"THE WIZARD SAYS THEY DEBATED *JOINING* THE FRAY, BUT ALL DECIDED TO CUT THEIR LOSSES AND *RUN* WHILE THEY HAD THE CHANCE...

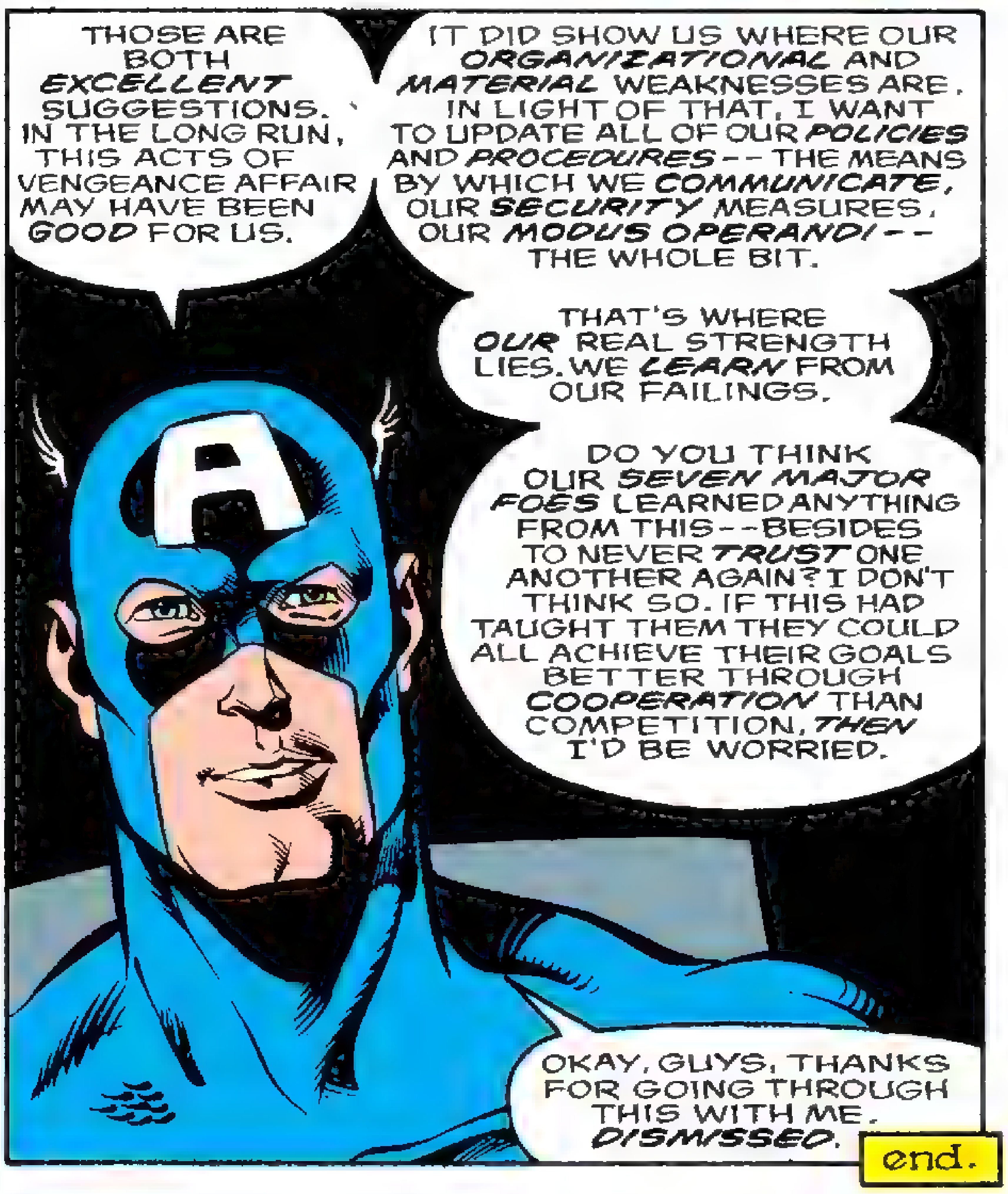

"THE WASP WARNED ME THEY WERE ESCAPING, BUT I TOLD HER TO FORGET ABOUT THEM AND CONCENTRATE ON STAYING ALIVE."
"DR. PYM AND I WERE OUT OF RANGE OF YOUR VOICE, CAPTAIN--
"...SO WE SEIZED THE INITIATIVE AND GAVE CHASE.
"UNFORTUNATELY, THERE WERE THREE OF THEM AND BUT TWO OF US, SO ONE OF THEM, THE MANDARIN, WAS ABLE TO MAKE GOOD HIS ESCAPE THROUGH THE INTERDIMENSIONAL PORTAL.
"DR. PYM, HOWEVER, SUBDUED BENTLEY WITTMAN IN A MOST EXPEDIENT FASHION--
"--WHILE I ENGAGED THE ALLEGED RED SKULL.
"IT WAS CURIOUS. ALTERING MY TANGIBILITY TO NEGLIGIBLE, I PASSED THROUGH HIM, INTENDING TO SOLIDIFY JUST ENOUGH TO RENDER HIM UNCONSCIOUS.
"BUT AS I PHASED, I IMMEDIATELY DISCERNED THAT IT WAS NOT A HUMAN BEING I WAS INTERACTING WITH--BUT AN AUTOMATON NOT ALTOGETHER UNLIKE MYSELF.
"CONSEQUENTLY, I SOLIDIFIED ON MY WAY OUT AND COMPLETELY DISRUPTED HIS MOTIVATIONAL MECHANISMS.
"I REGISTERED THE WIZARD'S UTTERANCE OF DISBELIEF THAT A SECOND OF HIS COHORTS TURNED OUT TO BE A FALSE MAN.
"HIS PRECISE WORDS WERE, 'WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF DOING THAT?'"
"BY THEN, MY BATTLE WITH MY MAD BROTHER HAD REACHED ITS INEVITABLE CONCLUSION...
"...AND WHEN HE FELL INTO A FISSURE I HAD CREATED IN THE PLANET'S CRUST--
"--I SEALED THE GAP WITH THE MIGHT OF MY LIMBS!"

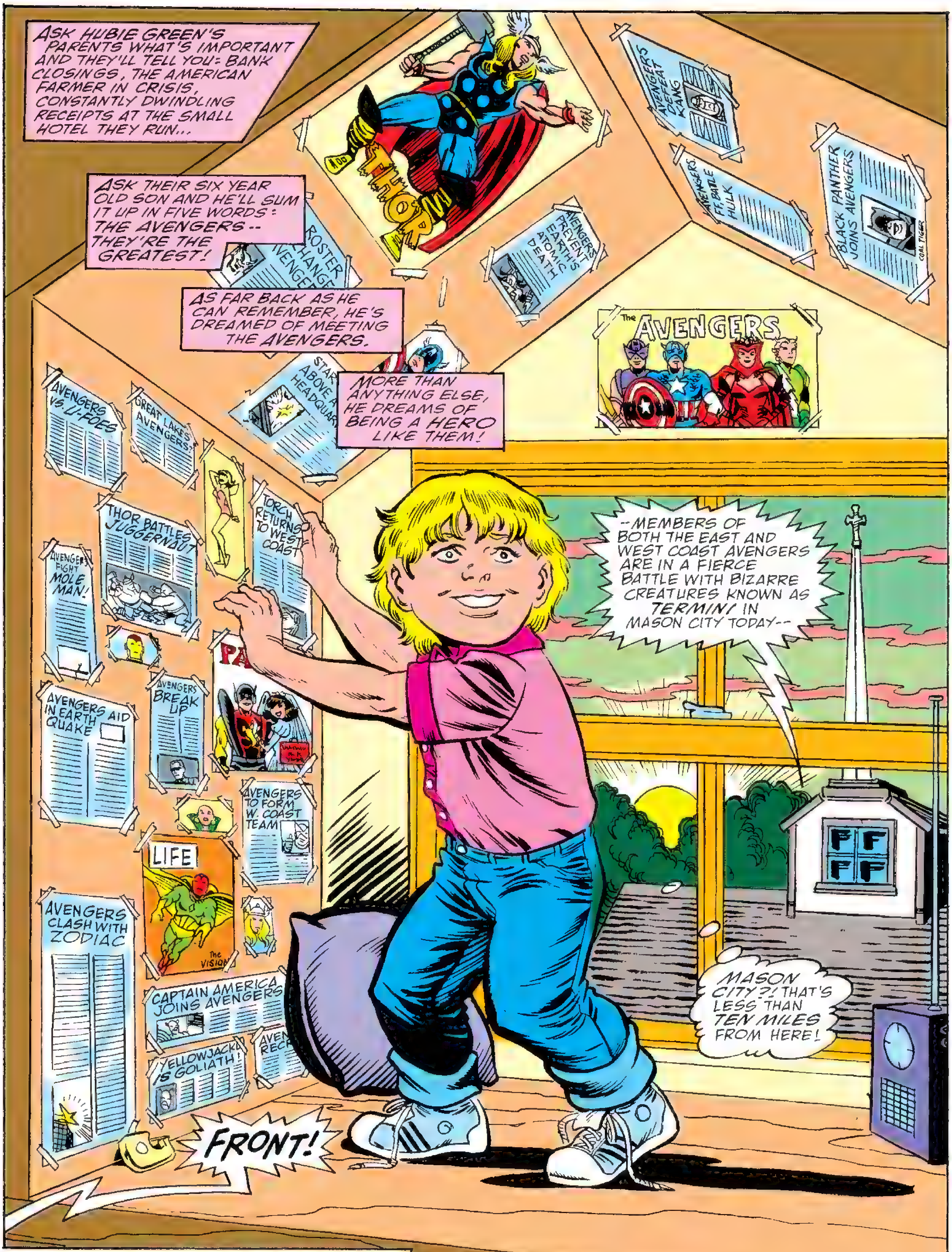

"VENGEANCE HAVING THUS BEEN WREAKED, I REOPENED THE *DIMENSIONAL PORTAL* AND TRANSPORTED US ALL BACK.


"THAT'S RIGHT, AND AS SOON AS EVERYONE MADE THEIR *STATEMENTS*, I DISMISSED THEM, EXCEPT FOR THE THREE OF *US*, OF COURSE.


WE WERE FORTUNATE WE'D MANAGED TO NAB AT LEAST *ONE* OF THE MAJOR OPPOSITION PLAYERS, OR TRYING TO PIECE TOGETHER WHAT HAD HAPPENED THESE PAST TWO WEEKS WOULD HAVE BEEN A *NIGHTMARE*.
SO THE *FINAL SCORE* IS THIS: WE MANAGED TO DEFEAT THE *INSTIGATOR* OF THE ACTS OF VENGEANCE AFFAIR AND *ONE* OF HIS ACCOMPLICES.
MAGNETO, *DR. DOOM*, THE *RED SKULL*, *KINGPIN*, AND THE *MANDARIN* GOT AWAY, BUT WE MANAGED TO RETRIEVE DOOM AND SKULL *ROBOTS* FOR ANALYSIS.
WE SUSTAINED THE HEAVIEST *DAMAGES* TO OUR MATERIAL FACILITIES TO *DATE* AND HAVE BEEN FORCED TO OPERATE UNDER *MAKESHIFT CONDITIONS*.
ON THE *PLUS* SIDE, THE ONLY CASUALTY WE HAD IN ALL THIS WAS *STINGRAY*, BUT HE'S EXPECTED TO BE RELEASED FROM THE HOSPITAL BY THE END OF THE WEEK. AND CONGRESS'S *SUPERHUMAN POWERS ACT* IS EXPECTED TO BE *SHELVED*.
THE QUESTION BEFORE US, GENTLEMEN, IS HOW CAN WE PREVENT SOMETHING LIKE THIS FROM HAPPENING *AGAIN*?

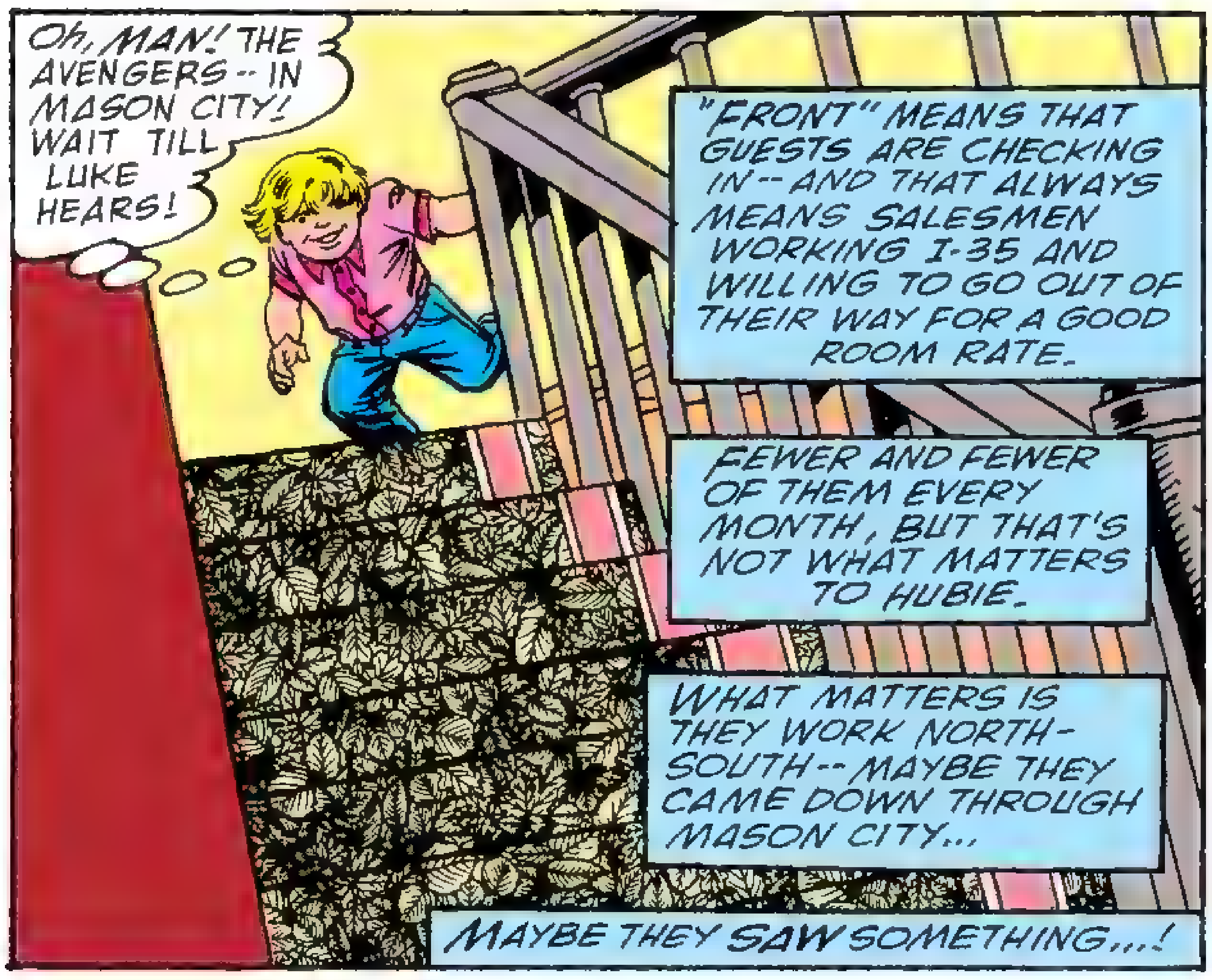

PERHAPS IF WE WERE TO TAKE A MORE *AGGRESSIVE* APPROACH TO *WORLD SECURITY*... ORCHESTRATE MORE *PREEMPTIVE STRIKES* ON PERPETRATORS AT LARGE...?
WE MUST *REBUILD* OUR MANSION FORTRESS SO IT IS *IMPREGNABLE*. SURELY WE HAVE THE *RESOURCES* TO CONSTRUCT A STRONGHOLD THAT IS *PROOF* AGAINST ALL MANNER OF *ATTACK*.
I HAVE A FRIEND WHO IS AN *ARCHITECT* WHOM I TRUST IMPLICITLY. HE MIGHT BE A BOON TO US.

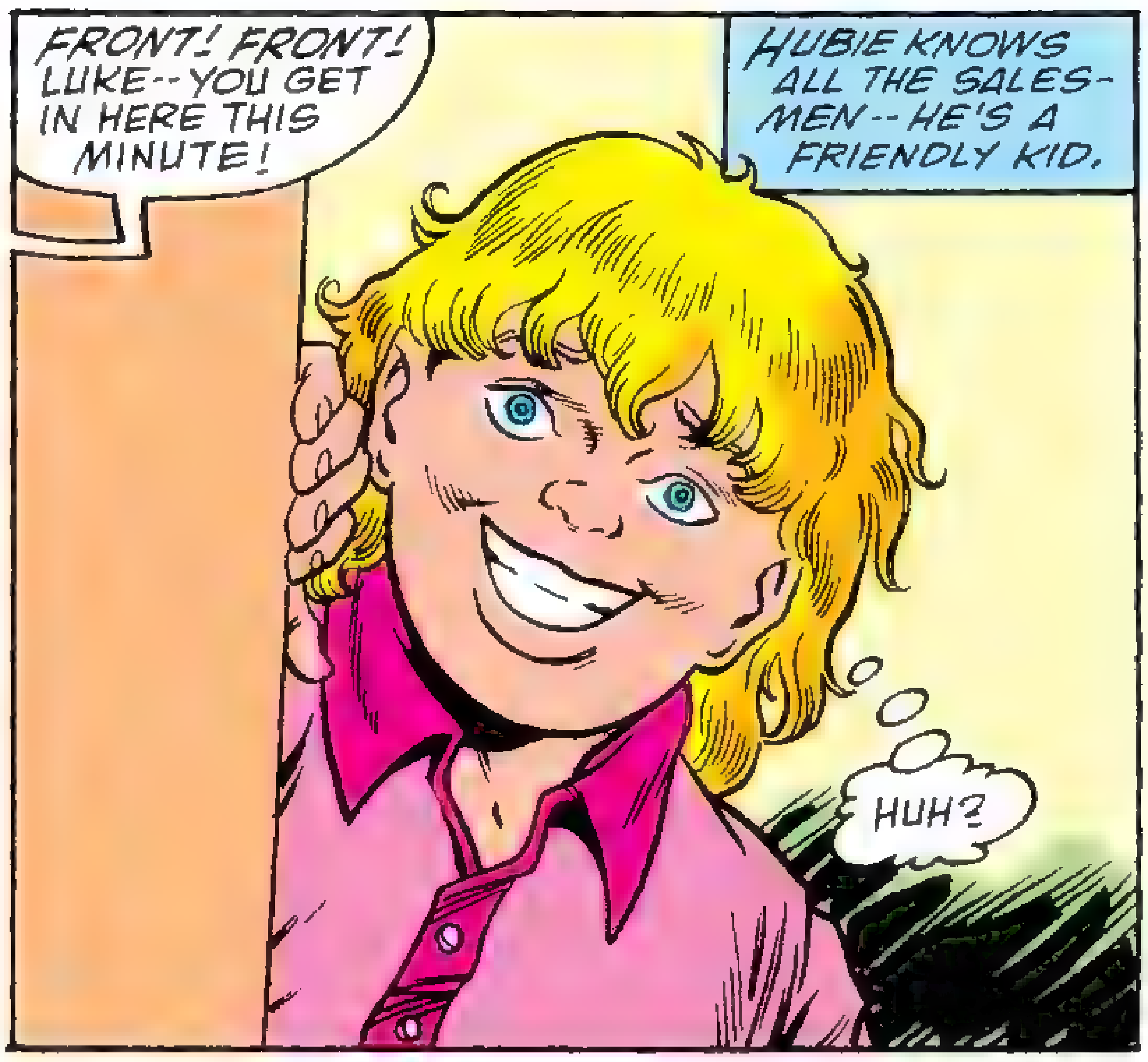

THOSE ARE BOTH *EXCELLENT* SUGGESTIONS. IN THE LONG RUN, THIS ACTS OF VENGEANCE AFFAIR MAY HAVE BEEN *GOOD* FOR US.
IT DID SHOW US WHERE OUR *ORGANIZATIONAL* AND *MATERIAL* WEAKNESSES ARE. IN LIGHT OF THAT, I WANT TO UPDATE ALL OF OUR *POLICIES* AND *PROCEDURES* -- THE MEANS BY WHICH WE *COMMUNICATE*, OUR *SECURITY* MEASURES, OUR *MODUS OPERANDI* -- THE WHOLE BIT.
THAT'S WHERE *OUR* REAL STRENGTH LIES. WE *LEARN* FROM OUR FAILINGS.
DO YOU THINK OUR *SEVEN MAJOR FOES* LEARNED ANYTHING FROM THIS -- BESIDES TO NEVER *TRUST* ONE ANOTHER AGAIN? I DON'T THINK SO. IF THIS HAD TAUGHT THEM THEY COULD ALL ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS BETTER THROUGH *COOPERATION* THAN COMPETITION, *THEN* I'D BE WORRIED.
OKAY, GUYS, THANKS FOR GOING THROUGH THIS WITH ME. *DISMISSED*.
end.

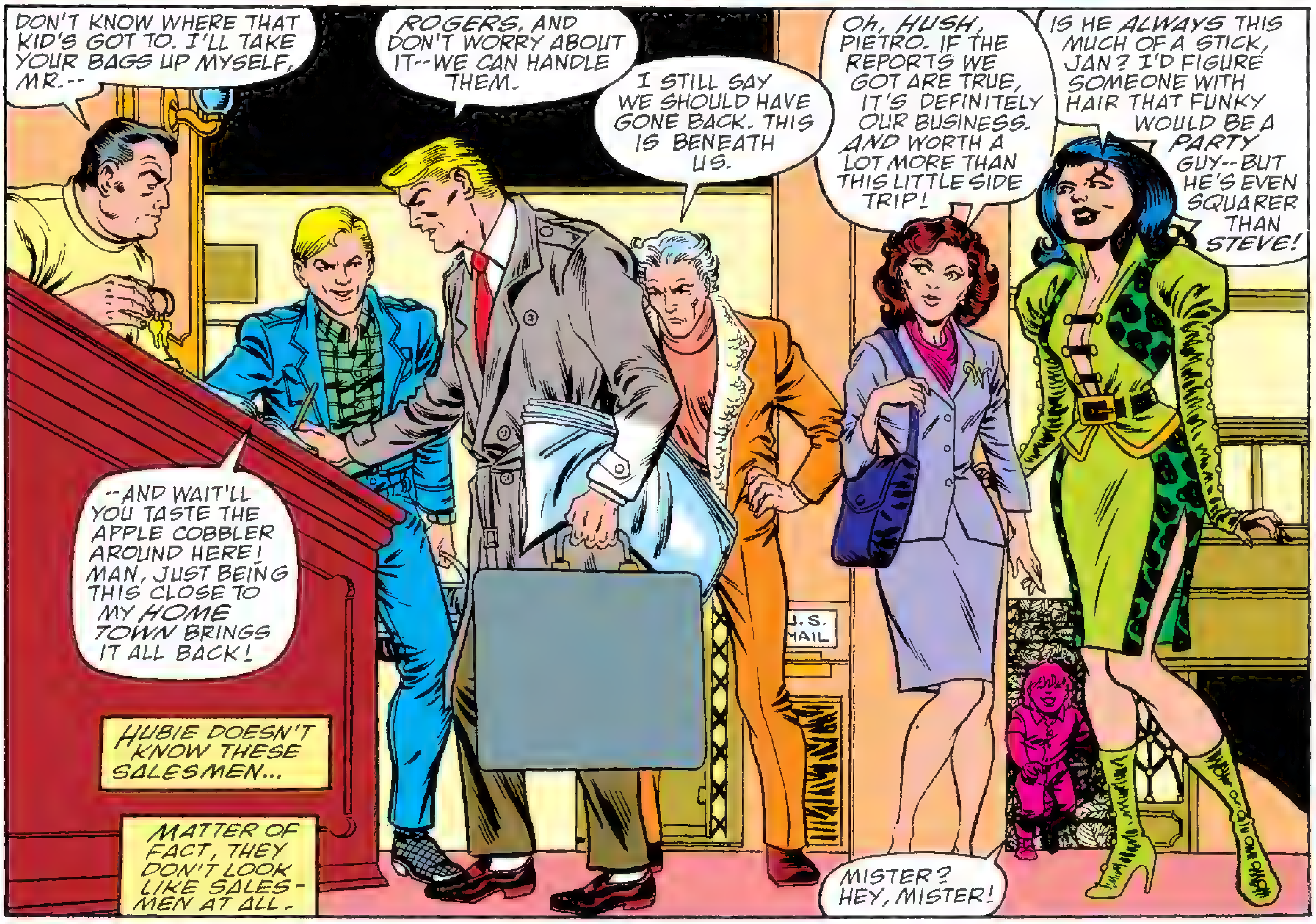

ASK HUBIE GREEN'S PARENTS WHAT'S IMPORTANT AND THEY'LL TELL YOU: BANK CLOSINGS, THE AMERICAN FARMER IN CRISIS, CONSTANTLY DWINDLING RECEIPTS AT THE SMALL HOTEL THEY RUN...
ASK THEIR SIX YEAR OLD SON AND HE'LL SUM IT UP IN FIVE WORDS: THE AVENGERS -- THEY'RE THE GREATEST!
AS FAR BACK AS HE CAN REMEMBER, HE'S DREAMED OF MEETING THE AVENGERS.
MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE, HE DREAMS OF BEING A HERO LIKE THEM!
THOR
AVENGERS DEFEAT KANG
AVENGERS, FF BATTLE HULK
BLACK PANTHER JOINS AVENGERS
COAL TIGER
AVENGERS PREVENT EARTH'S ATOMIC DEATH
ROSTER CHANGE AVENGERS
STAR ABOVE HEADQUAR
The AVENGERS
AVENGERS VS. U-FOES
GREAT LAKES AVENGERS?
THOR BATTLES JUGGERNAUT
TORCH RETURNS TO WEST COAST
AVENGERS FIGHT MOLE MAN!
PA
AVENGERS AID IN EARTH QUAKE
AVENGERS BREAK UP
AVENGERS TO FORM W. COAST TEAM
LIFE
The VISION
AVENGERS CLASH WITH ZODIAC
CAPTAIN AMERICA JOINS AVENGERS
YELLOWJACK IS GOLIATH!
AVEN REC
FRONT!
--MEMBERS OF BOTH THE EAST AND WEST COAST AVENGERS ARE IN A FIERCE BATTLE WITH BIZARRE CREATURES KNOWN AS TERMINI IN MASON CITY TODAY--
MASON CITY?! THAT'S LESS THAN TEN MILES FROM HERE!

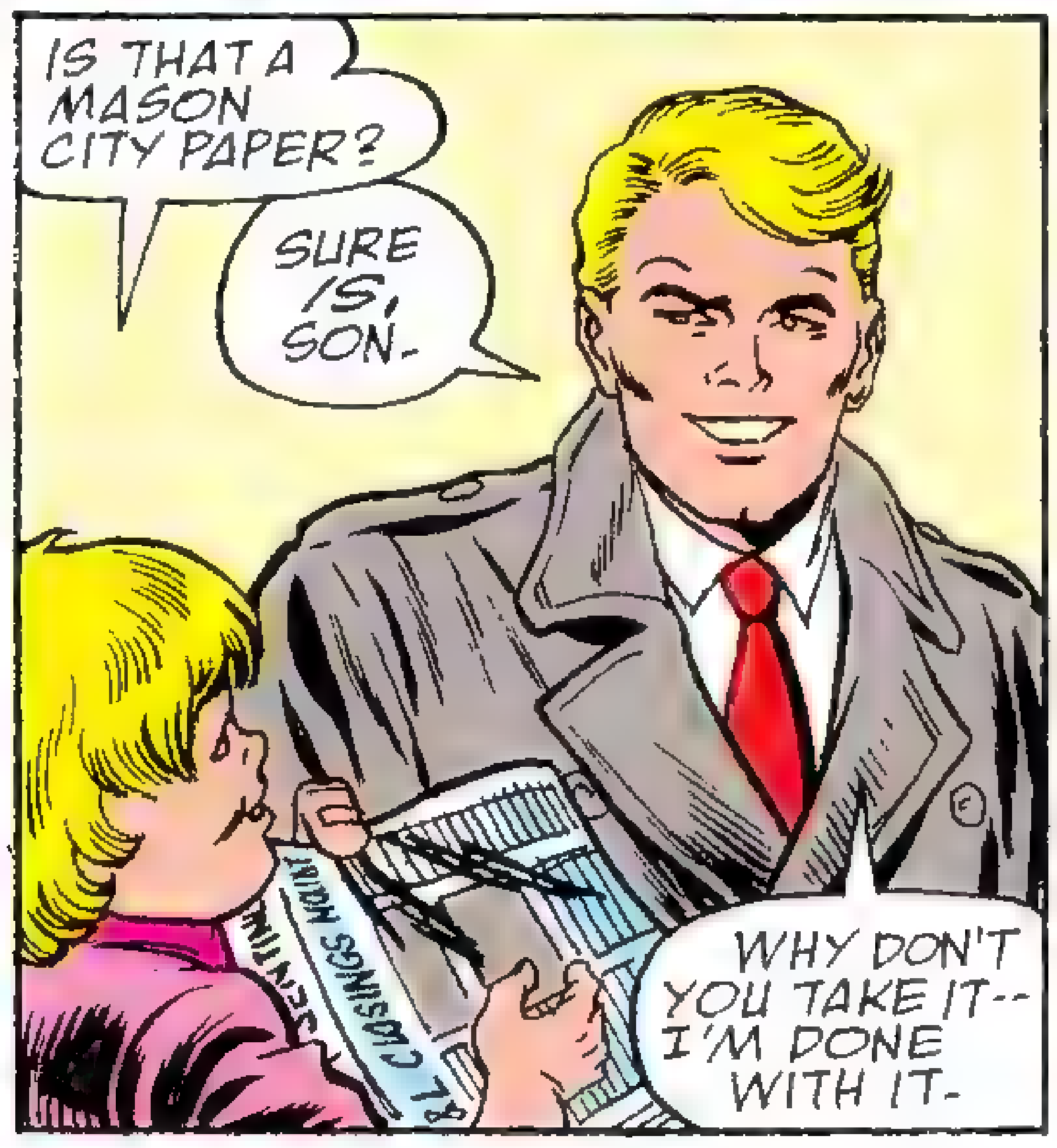
THE DAY THE STRANGERS CAME

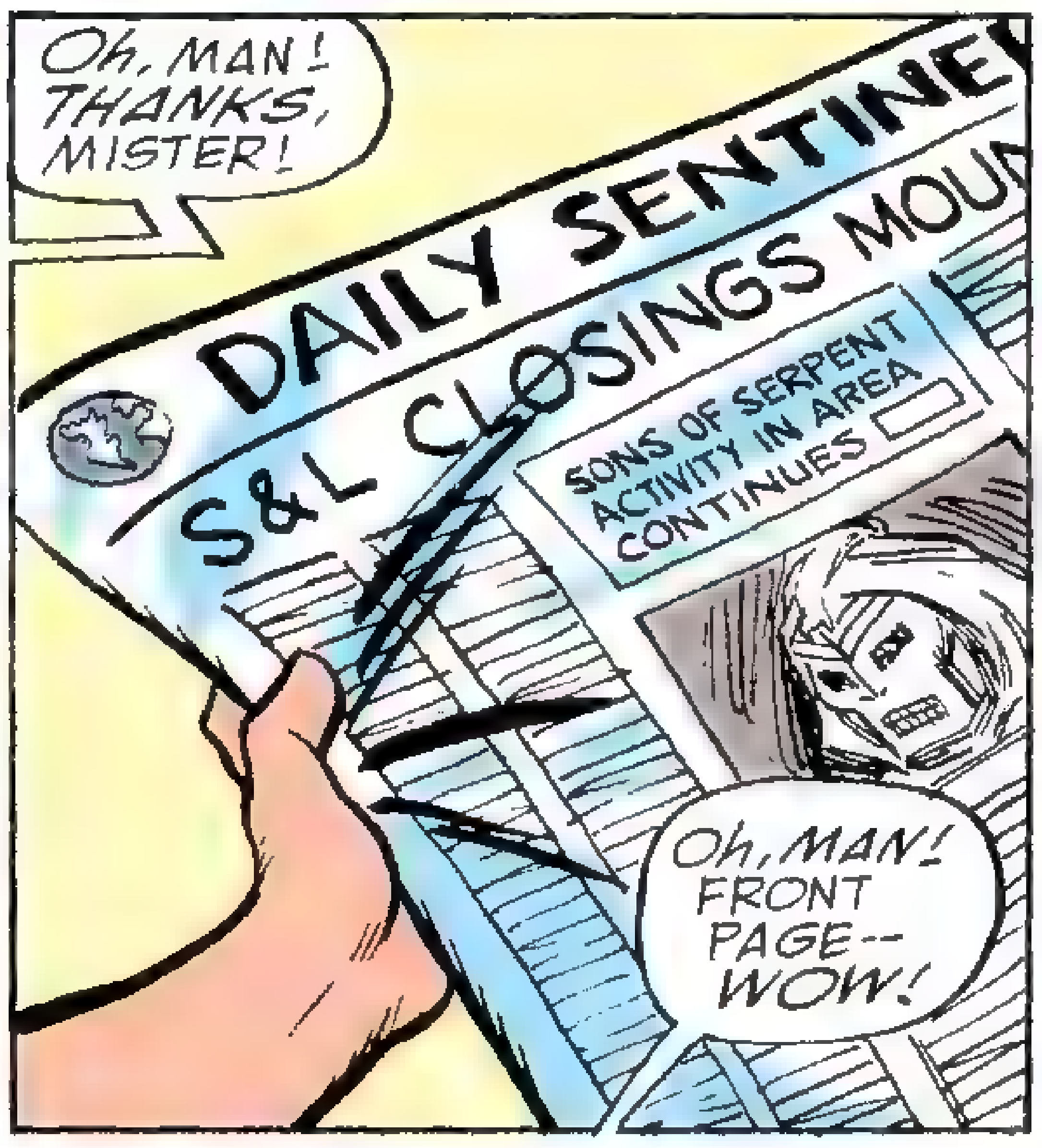
KURT BUSIEK · WRITER · RICHARD HOWELL · ARTIST · JACK MORELLI · LETTERS · RICHARD HOWELL · COLORS · HOWARD MACKIE · EDITOR · TOM DeFALCO · CHIEF

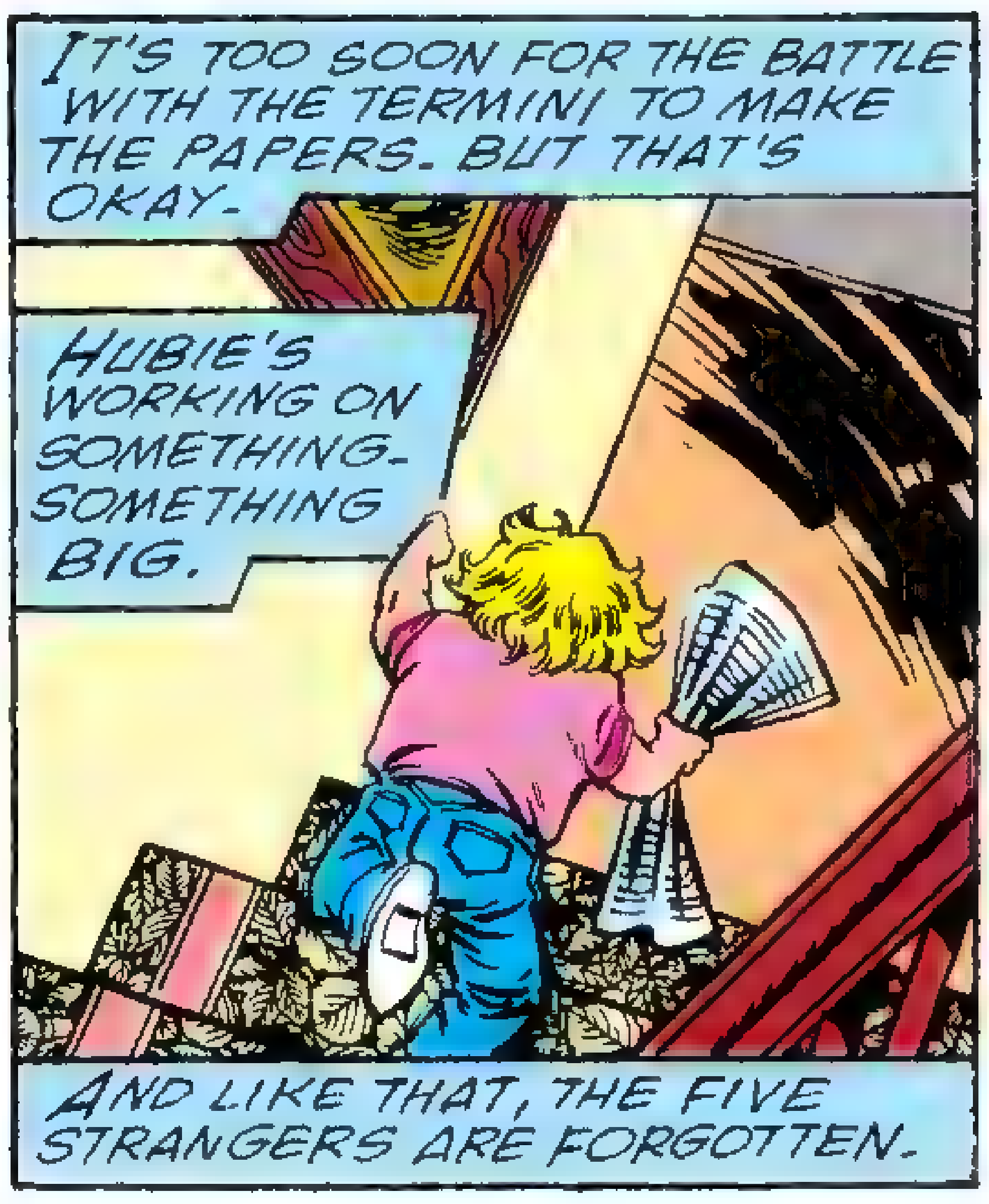

Oh, MAN! THE AVENGERS -- IN MASON CITY! WAIT TILL LUKE HEARS!
"FRONT" MEANS THAT GUESTS ARE CHECKING IN -- AND THAT ALWAYS MEANS SALESMEN WORKING I-35 AND WILLING TO GO OUT OF THEIR WAY FOR A GOOD ROOM RATE.
FEWER AND FEWER OF THEM EVERY MONTH, BUT THAT'S NOT WHAT MATTERS TO HUBIE.
WHAT MATTERS IS THEY WORK NORTH-SOUTH -- MAYBE THEY CAME DOWN THROUGH MASON CITY...
MAYBE THEY SAW SOMETHING...!

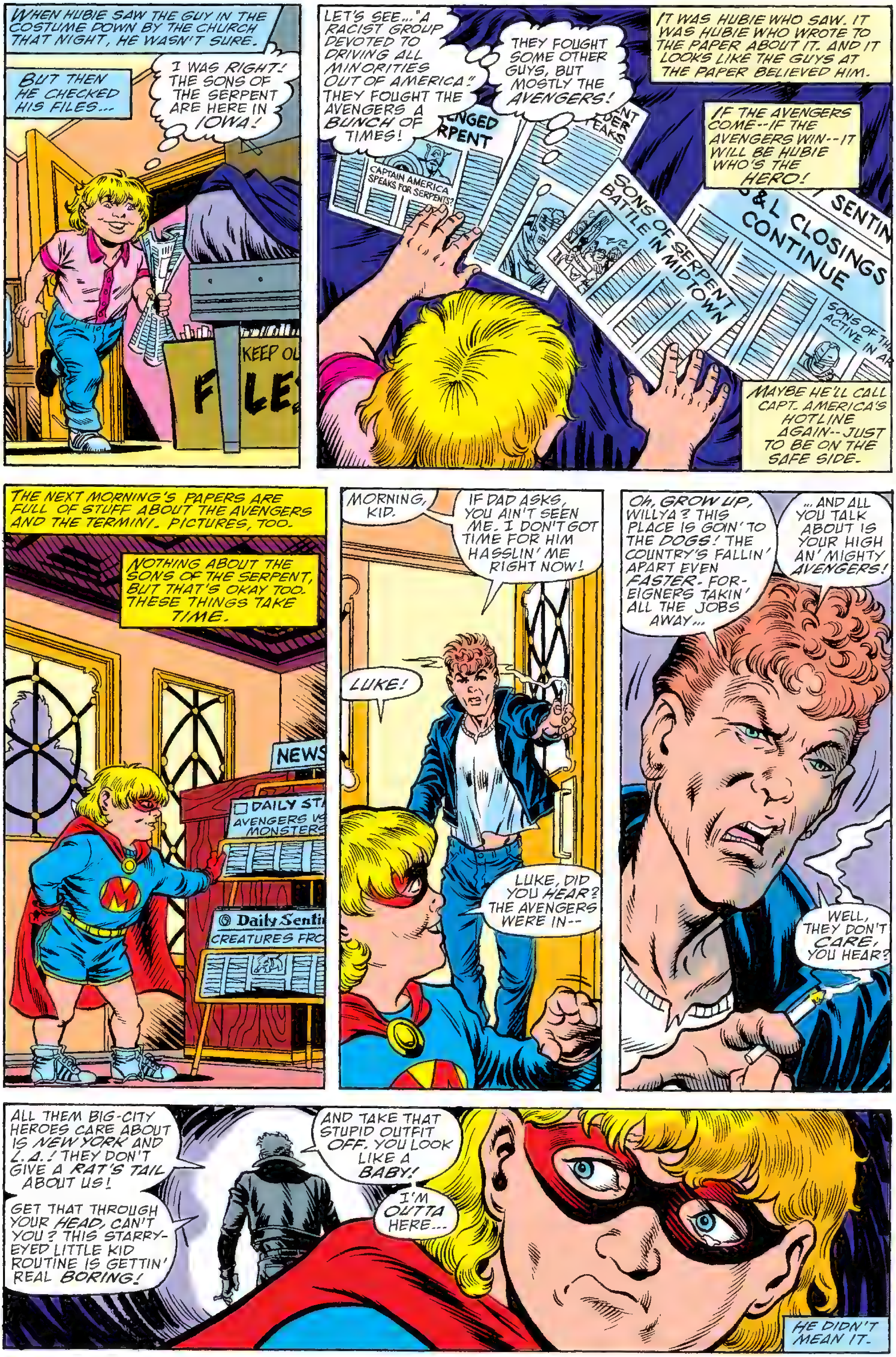

FRONT! FRONT! LUKE -- YOU GET IN HERE THIS MINUTE!
HUBIE KNOWS ALL THE SALESMEN -- HE'S A FRIENDLY KID.
HUH?

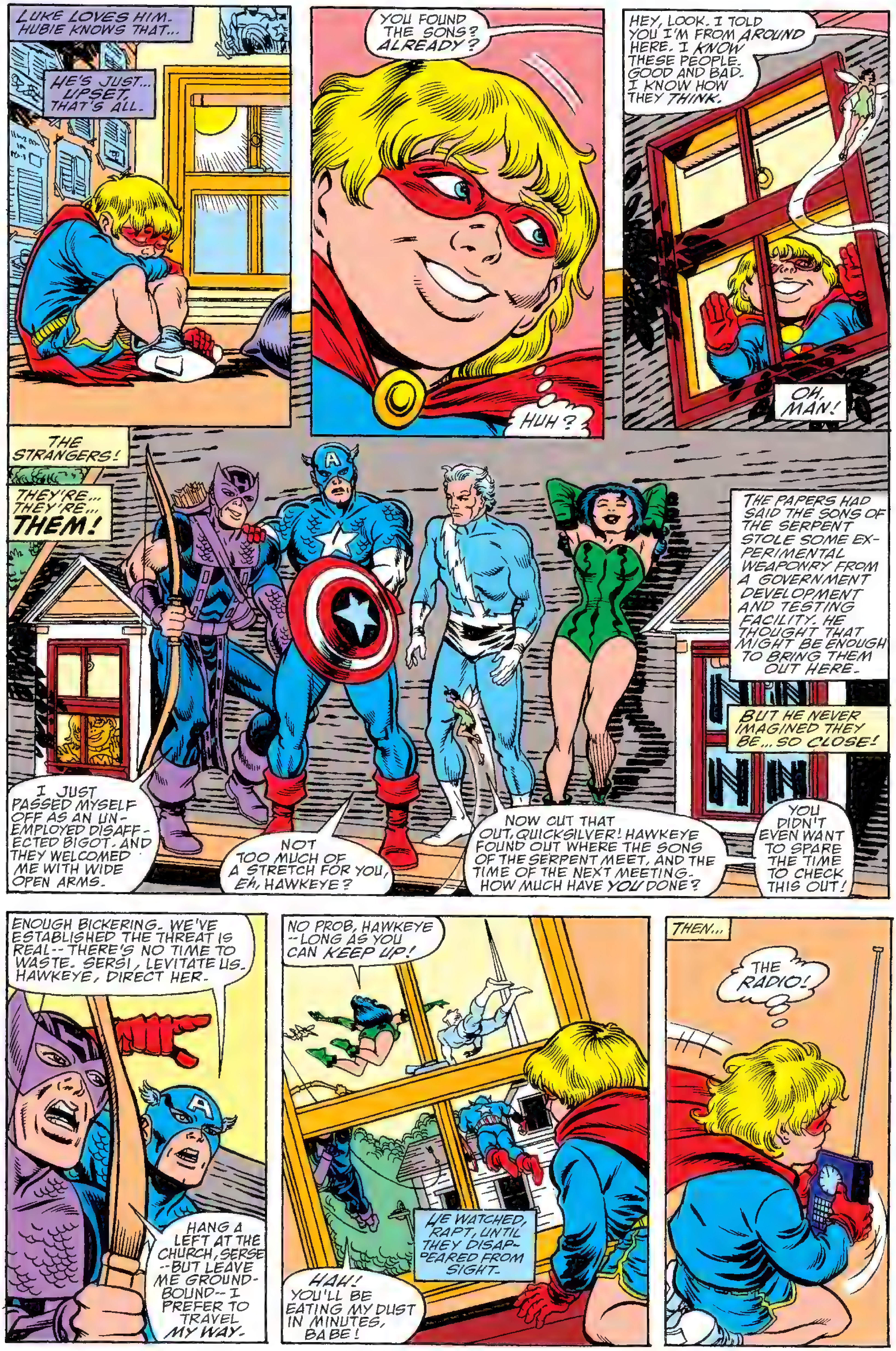

DON'T KNOW WHERE THAT KID'S GOT TO. I'LL TAKE YOUR BAGS UP MYSELF, MR. --
ROGERS. AND DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT -- WE CAN HANDLE THEM.
I STILL SAY WE SHOULD HAVE GONE BACK. THIS IS BENEATH US.
Oh, HUSH, PIETRO. IF THE REPORTS WE GOT ARE TRUE, IT'S DEFINITELY OUR BUSINESS. AND WORTH A LOT MORE THAN THIS LITTLE SIDE TRIP!
IS HE ALWAYS THIS MUCH OF A STICK, JAN? I'D FIGURE SOMEONE WITH HAIR THAT FUNKY WOULD BE A PARTY GUY -- BUT HE'S EVEN SQUARER THAN STEVE!
-- AND WAIT'LL YOU TASTE THE APPLE COBBLER AROUND HERE! MAN, JUST BEING THIS CLOSE TO MY HOME TOWN BRINGS IT ALL BACK!
HUBIE DOESN'T KNOW THESE SALESMEN...
MATTER OF FACT, THEY DON'T LOOK LIKE SALESMEN AT ALL.
U.S. MAIL
MISTER? HEY, MISTER!

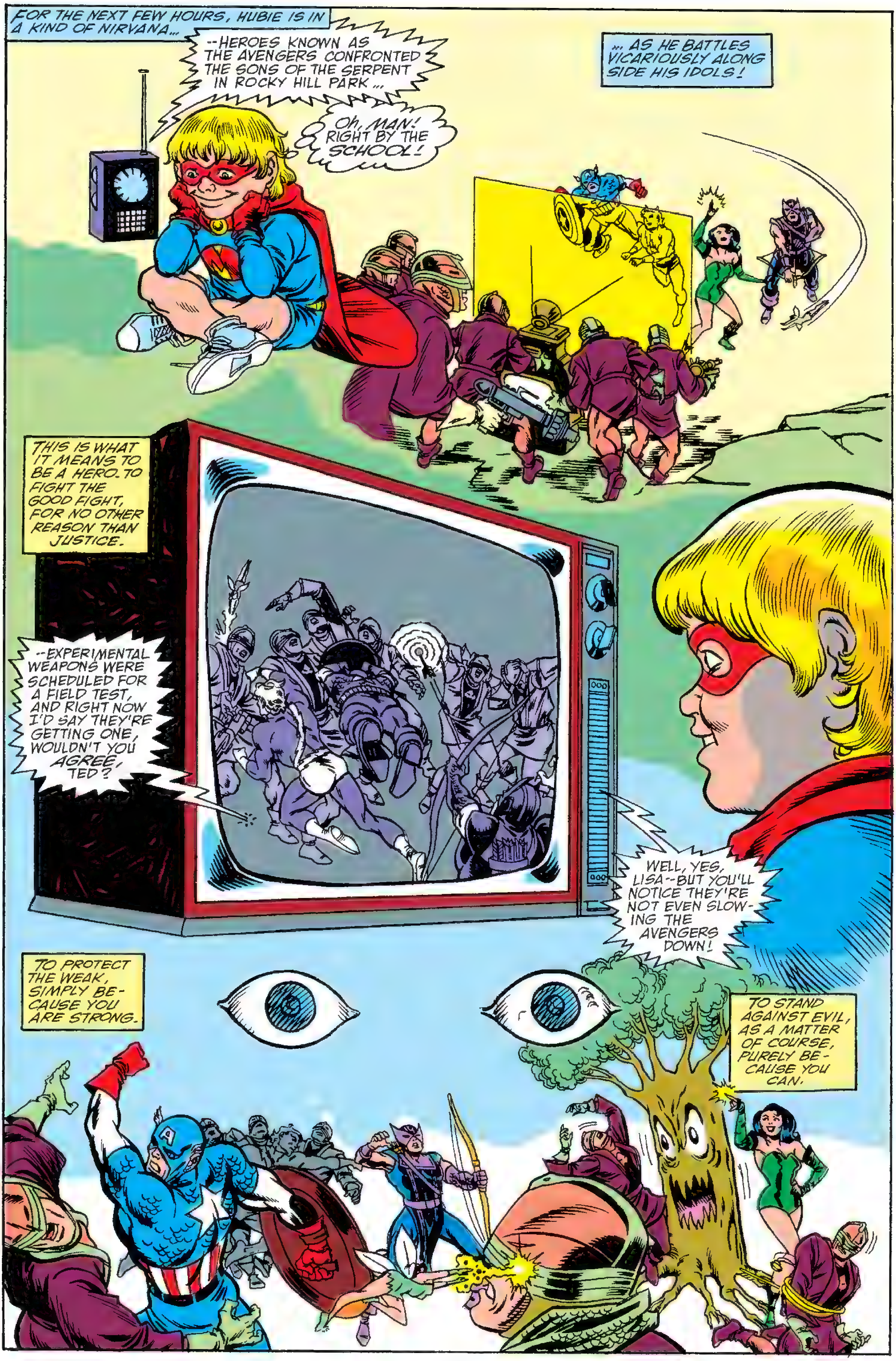

IS THAT A MASON CITY PAPER?
SURE IS, SON.
WHY DON'T YOU TAKE IT -- I'M DONE WITH IT.

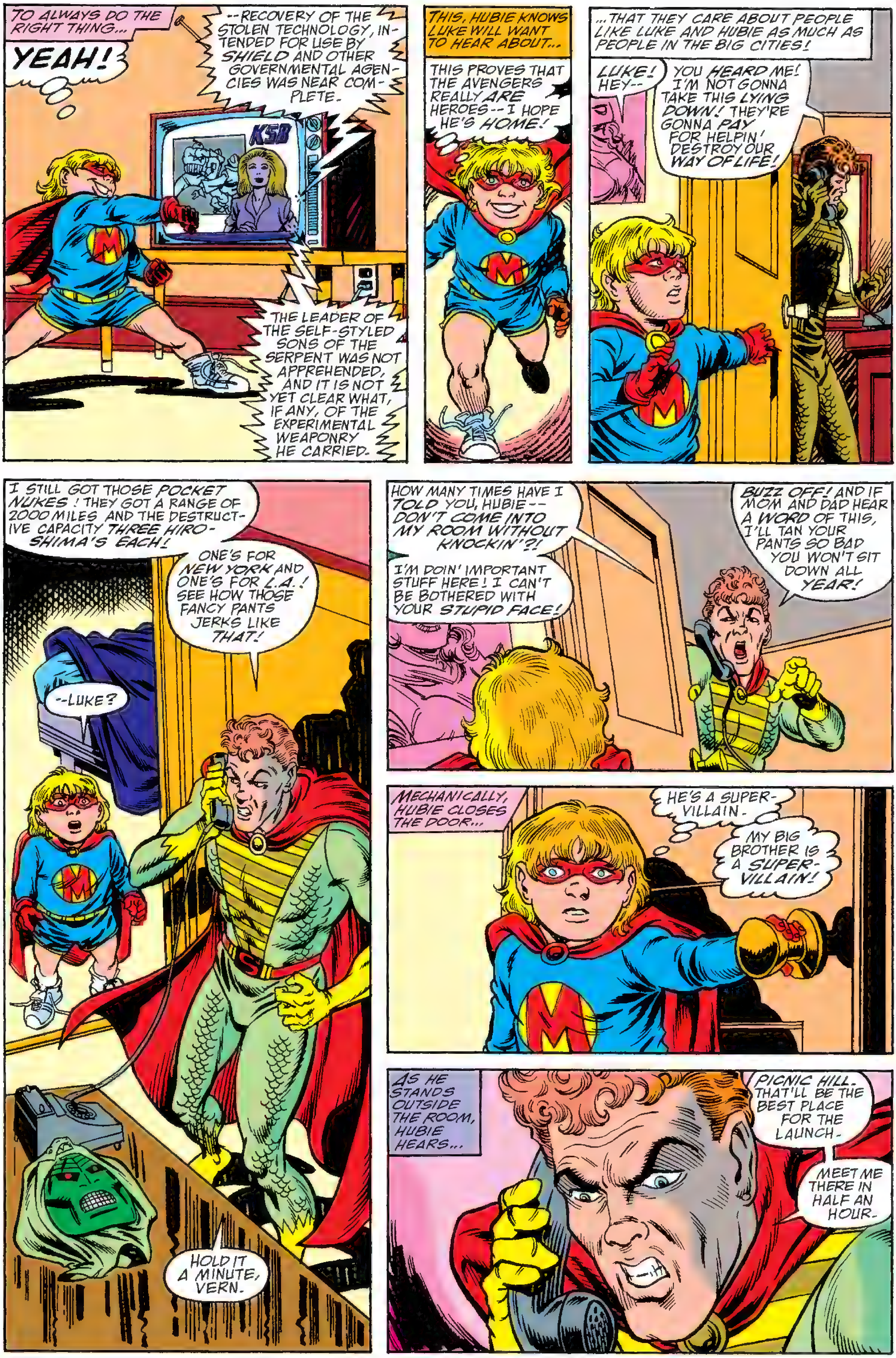

Oh, MAN! THANKS, MISTER!
DAILY SENTINE
S&L CLOSINGS MOUN
SONS OF SERPENT ACTIVITY IN AREA CONTINUES
Oh, MAN! FRONT PAGE -- WOW!

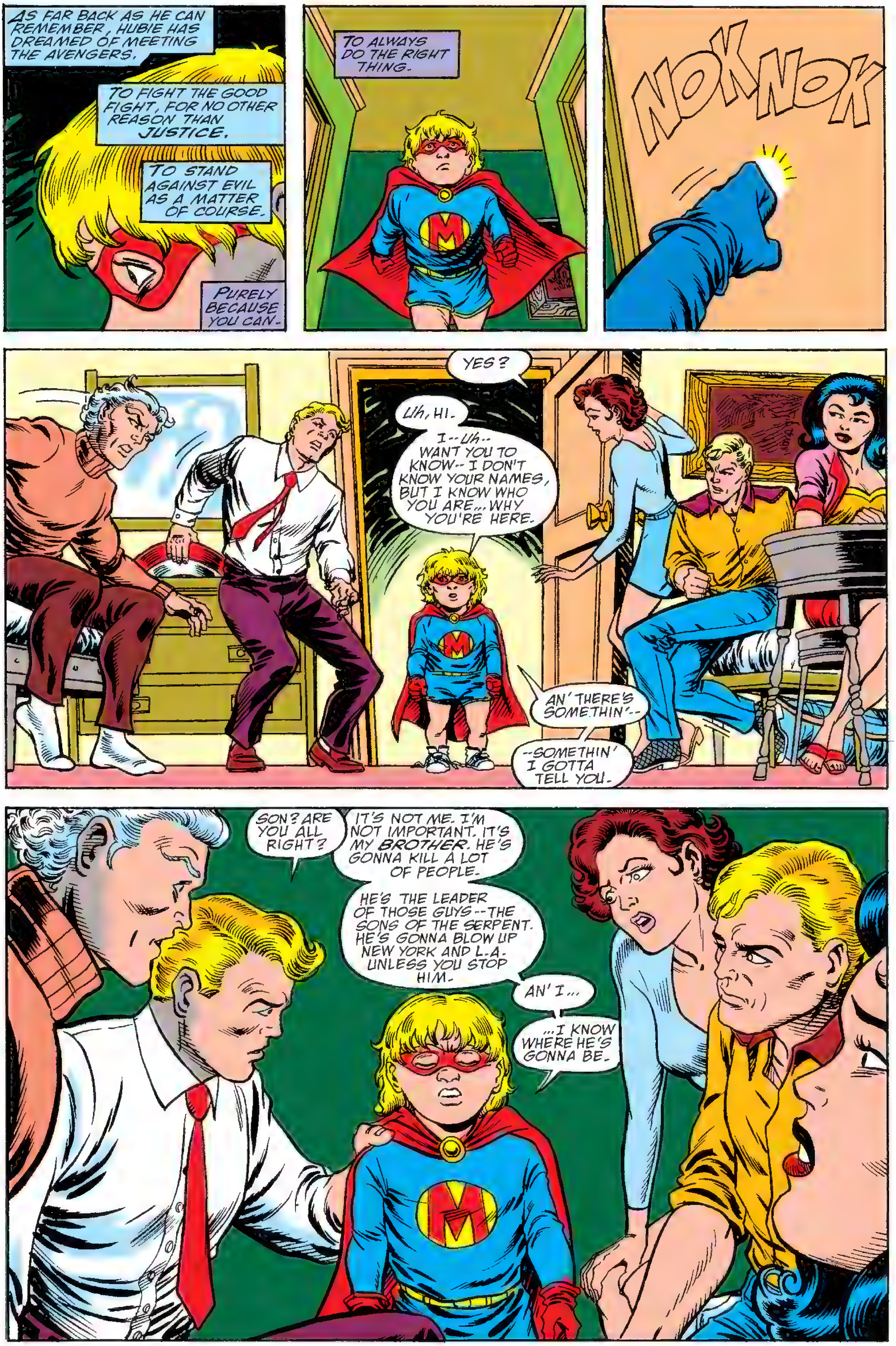

IT'S TOO SOON FOR THE BATTLE WITH THE TERMINI TO MAKE THE PAPERS. BUT THAT'S OKAY.
HUBIE'S WORKING ON SOMETHING. SOMETHING BIG.
AND LIKE THAT, THE FIVE STRANGERS ARE FORGOTTEN.

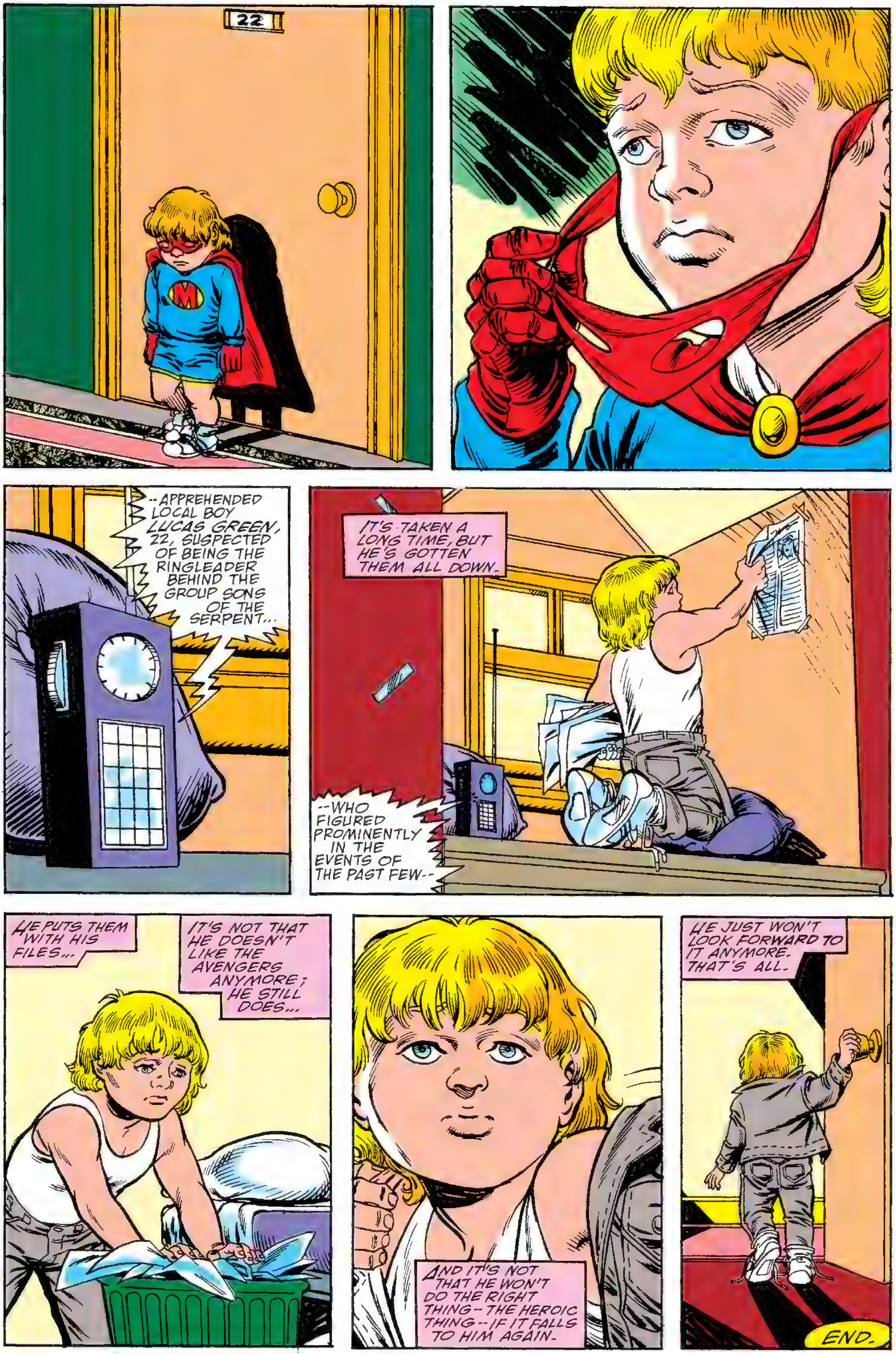

WHEN HUBIE SAW THE GUY IN THE COSTUME DOWN BY THE CHURCH THAT NIGHT, HE WASN'T SURE.
BUT THEN HE CHECKED HIS FILES...
I WAS RIGHT! THE SONS OF THE SERPENT ARE HERE IN IOWA!
KEEP OU
LET'S SEE..."A RACIST GROUP DEVOTED TO DRIVING ALL MINORITIES OUT OF AMERICA." THEY FOUGHT THE AVENGERS A BUNCH OF TIMES!
THEY FOUGHT SOME OTHER GUYS, BUT MOSTLY THE AVENGERS!
CAPTAIN AMERICA SPEAKS FOR SERPENTS?
SONS OF SERPENT BATTLE IN MIDTOWN
S&L CLOSINGS CONTINUE
SONS OF THE ACTIVE IN AR
IT WAS HUBIE WHO SAW. IT WAS HUBIE WHO WROTE TO THE PAPER ABOUT IT. AND IT LOOKS LIKE THE GUYS AT THE PAPER BELIEVED HIM.
IF THE AVENGERS COME--IF THE AVENGERS WIN--IT WILL BE HUBIE WHO'S THE HERO!
MAYBE HE'LL CALL CAPT. AMERICA'S HOTLINE AGAIN--JUST TO BE ON THE SAFE SIDE.
THE NEXT MORNING'S PAPERS ARE FULL OF STUFF ABOUT THE AVENGERS AND THE TERMINI. PICTURES, TOO.
NOTHING ABOUT THE SONS OF THE SERPENT, BUT THAT'S OKAY TOO. THESE THINGS TAKE TIME.
NEWS
DAILY ST
AVENGERS VS MONSTERS
Daily Senti
CREATURES FRO
MORNING, KID.
IF DAD ASKS, YOU AIN'T SEEN ME. I DON'T GOT TIME FOR HIM HASSLIN' ME RIGHT NOW!
LUKE!
LUKE, DID YOU HEAR? THE AVENGERS WERE IN--
OH, GROW UP, WILLYA? THIS PLACE IS GOIN' TO THE DOGS! THE COUNTRY'S FALLIN' APART EVEN FASTER. FOREIGNERS TAKIN' ALL THE JOBS AWAY...
...AND ALL YOU TALK ABOUT IS YOUR HIGH AN' MIGHTY AVENGERS!
WELL, THEY DON'T CARE, YOU HEAR?
ALL THEM BIG-CITY HEROES CARE ABOUT IS NEW YORK AND L.A.! THEY DON'T GIVE A RAT'S TAIL ABOUT US!
GET THAT THROUGH YOUR HEAD, CAN'T YOU? THIS STARRY-EYED LITTLE KID ROUTINE IS GETTIN' REAL BORING!
AND TAKE THAT STUPID OUTFIT OFF. YOU LOOK LIKE A BABY!
I'M OUTTA HERE...
HE DIDN'T MEAN IT.

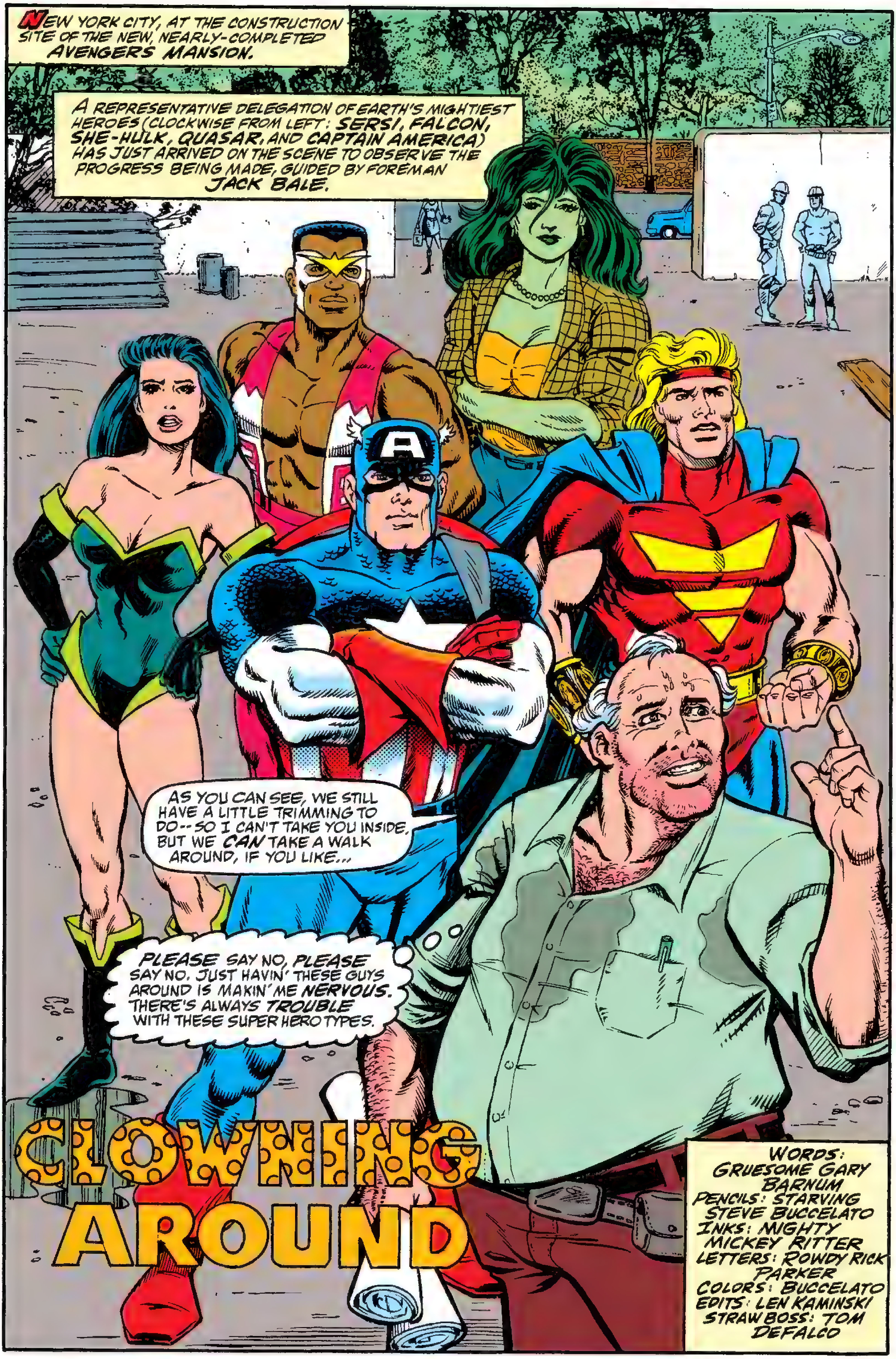

LUKE LOVES HIM. HUBIE KNOWS THAT...
HE'S JUST... UPSET. THAT'S ALL.
YOU FOUND THE SONS? ALREADY?
HUH?
HEY, LOOK. I TOLD YOU I'M FROM AROUND HERE. I KNOW THESE PEOPLE. GOOD AND BAD. I KNOW HOW THEY THINK.
OH, MAN!
THE STRANGERS!
THEY'RE... THEY'RE... THEM!
THE PAPERS HAD SAID THE SONS OF THE SERPENT STOLE SOME EXPERIMENTAL WEAPONRY FROM A GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT AND TESTING FACILITY. HE THOUGHT THAT MIGHT BE ENOUGH TO BRING THEM OUT HERE.
BUT HE NEVER IMAGINED THEY BE... SO CLOSE!
I JUST PASSED MYSELF OFF AS AN UNEMPLOYED DISAFFECTED BIGOT. AND THEY WELCOMED ME WITH WIDE OPEN ARMS.
NOT TOO MUCH OF A STRETCH FOR YOU, EH, HAWKEYE?
NOW CUT THAT OUT, QUICKSILVER! HAWKEYE FOUND OUT WHERE THE SONS OF THE SERPENT MEET, AND THE TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING. HOW MUCH HAVE YOU DONE?
YOU DIDN'T EVEN WANT TO SPARE THE TIME TO CHECK THIS OUT!
ENOUGH BICKERING. WE'VE ESTABLISHED THE THREAT IS REAL-- THERE'S NO TIME TO WASTE. SERSI, LEVITATE US. HAWKEYE, DIRECT HER.
HANG A LEFT AT THE CHURCH, SERSE --BUT LEAVE ME GROUND-BOUND-- I PREFER TO TRAVEL MY WAY.
NO PROB, HAWKEYE --LONG AS YOU CAN KEEP UP!
HE WATCHED, RAPT, UNTIL THEY DISAPPEARED FROM SIGHT.
HAH! YOU'LL BE EATING MY DUST IN MINUTES, BABE!
THEN...
THE RADIO!

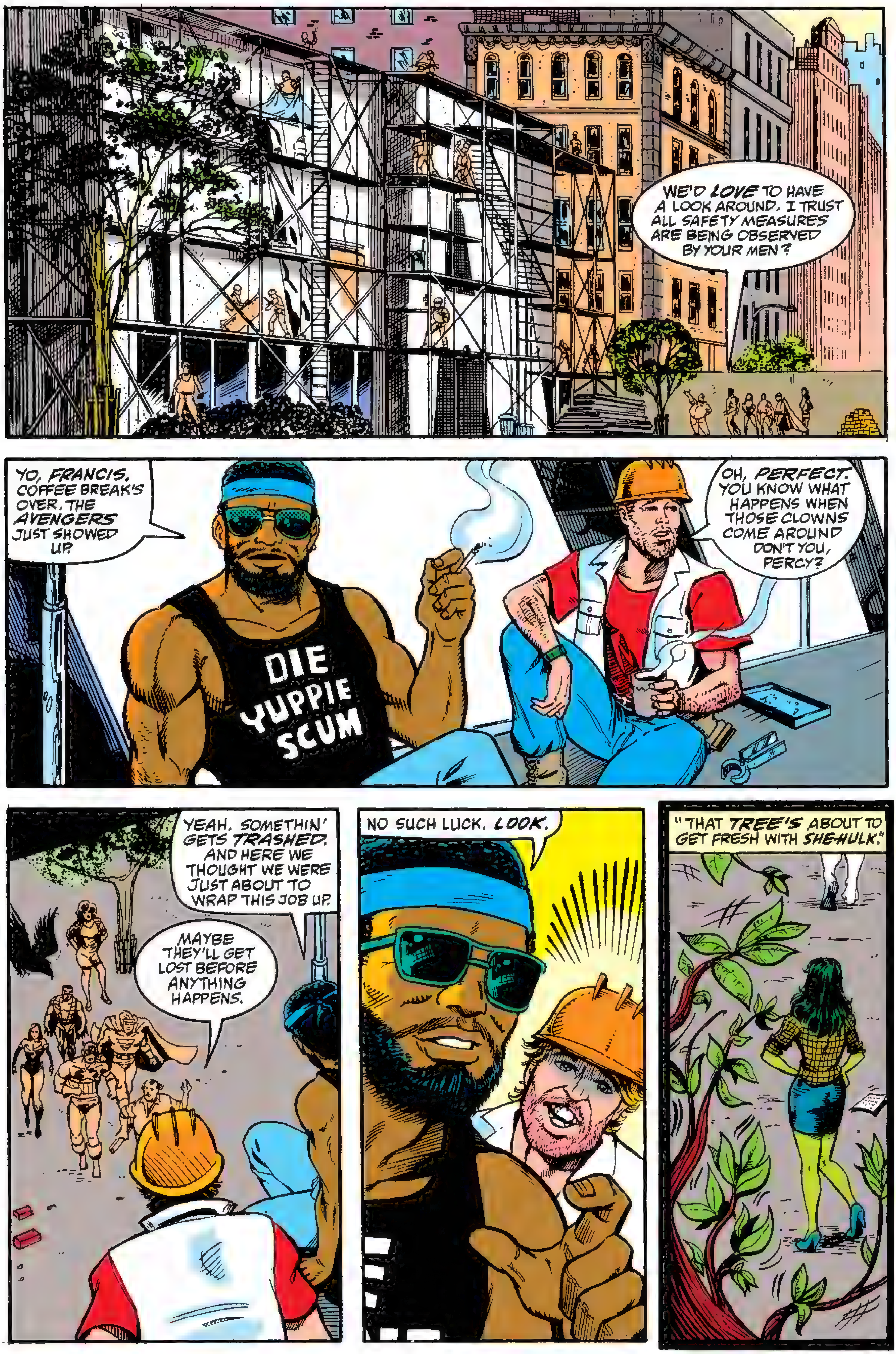

FOR THE NEXT FEW HOURS, HUBIE IS IN A KIND OF NIRVANA...
--HEROES KNOWN AS THE AVENGERS CONFRONTED THE SONS OF THE SERPENT IN ROCKY HILL PARK...
OH, MAN! RIGHT BY THE SCHOOL!
... AS HE BATTLES VICARIOUSLY ALONG SIDE HIS IDOLS!
THIS IS WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A HERO. TO FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT, FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN JUSTICE.
--EXPERIMENTAL WEAPONS WERE SCHEDULED FOR A FIELD TEST, AND RIGHT NOW I'D SAY THEY'RE GETTING ONE, WOULDN'T YOU AGREE, TED?
WELL, YES, LISA--BUT YOU'LL NOTICE THEY'RE NOT EVEN SLOWING THE AVENGERS DOWN!
TO PROTECT THE WEAK, SIMPLY BECAUSE YOU ARE STRONG.
TO STAND AGAINST EVIL, AS A MATTER OF COURSE, PURELY BECAUSE YOU CAN.


TO ALWAYS DO THE RIGHT THING...
YEAH!
--RECOVERY OF THE STOLEN TECHNOLOGY, INTENDED FOR USE BY SHIELD AND OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WAS NEAR COMPLETE.
KSB
THE LEADER OF THE SELF-STYLED SONS OF THE SERPENT WAS NOT APPREHENDED, AND IT IS NOT YET CLEAR WHAT, IF ANY, OF THE EXPERIMENTAL WEAPONRY HE CARRIED.
THIS, HUBIE KNOWS LUKE WILL WANT TO HEAR ABOUT...
THIS PROVES THAT THE AVENGERS REALLY ARE HEROES--I HOPE HE'S HOME!
...THAT THEY CARE ABOUT PEOPLE LIKE LUKE AND HUBIE AS MUCH AS PEOPLE IN THE BIG CITIES!
LUKE! HEY--
YOU HEARD ME! I'M NOT GONNA TAKE THIS LYING DOWN! THEY'RE GONNA PAY FOR HELPIN' DESTROY OUR WAY OF LIFE!
I STILL GOT THOSE POCKET NUKES! THEY GOT A RANGE OF 2000 MILES AND THE DESTRUCTIVE CAPACITY THREE HIROSHIMA'S EACH!
ONE'S FOR NEW YORK AND ONE'S FOR L.A.! SEE HOW THOSE FANCY PANTS JERKS LIKE THAT!
--LUKE?
HOLD IT A MINUTE, VERN.
HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU, HUBIE--DON'T COME INTO MY ROOM WITHOUT KNOCKIN'?!
I'M DOIN' IMPORTANT STUFF HERE! I CAN'T BE BOTHERED WITH YOUR STUPID FACE!
BUZZ OFF! AND IF MOM AND DAD HEAR A WORD OF THIS, I'LL TAN YOUR PANTS SO BAD YOU WON'T SIT DOWN ALL YEAR!
MECHANICALLY, HUBIE CLOSES THE DOOR...
HE'S A SUPER-VILLAIN.
MY BIG BROTHER IS A SUPER-VILLAIN!
AS HE STANDS OUTSIDE THE ROOM, HUBIE HEARS...
PICNIC HILL. THAT'LL BE THE BEST PLACE FOR THE LAUNCH.
MEET ME THERE IN HALF AN HOUR.

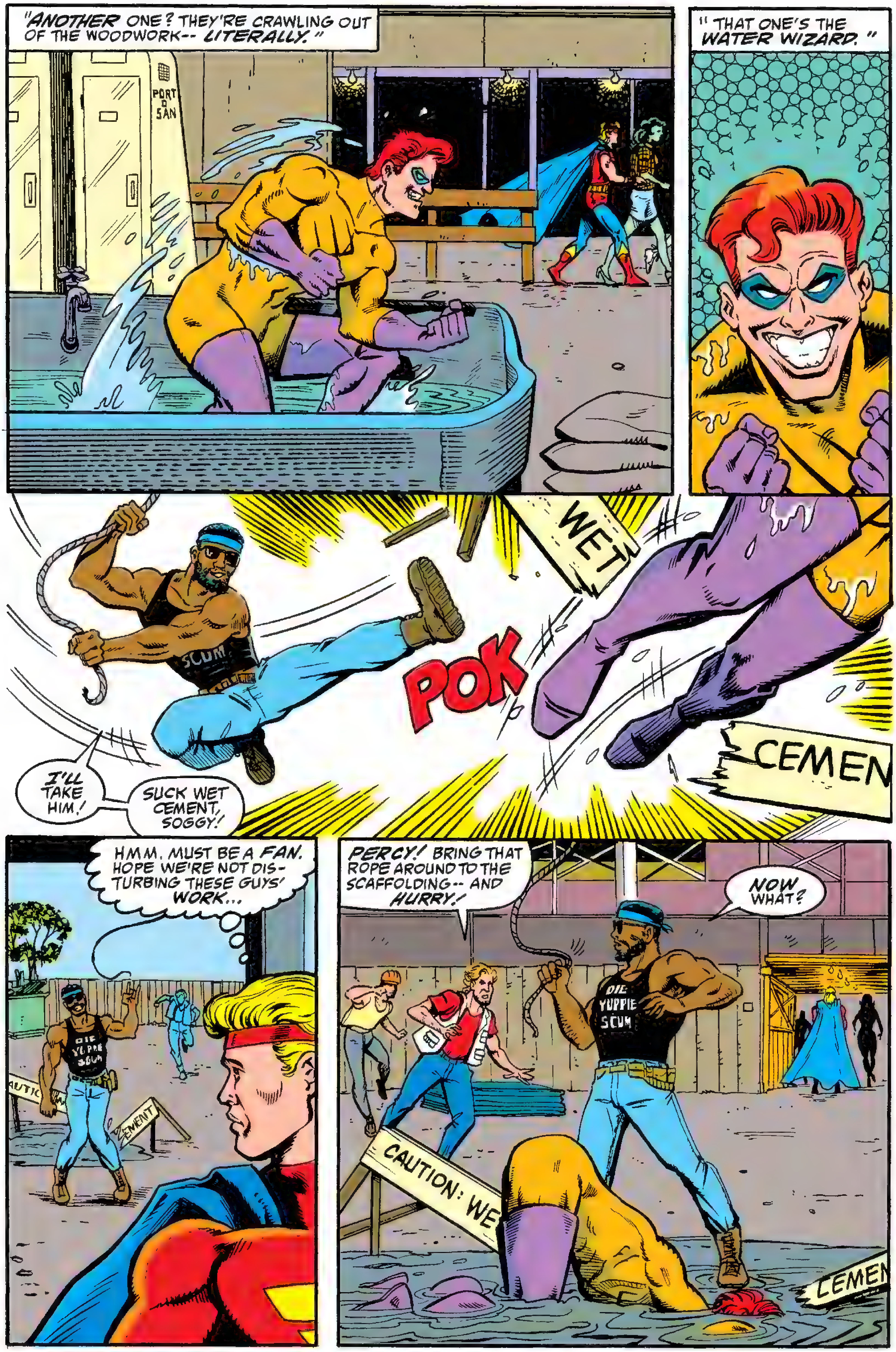

AS FAR BACK AS HE CAN REMEMBER, HUBIE HAS DREAMED OF MEETING THE AVENGERS.
TO FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT, FOR NO OTHER REASON THAN JUSTICE.
TO STAND AGAINST EVIL AS A MATTER OF COURSE.
PURELY BECAUSE YOU CAN.
TO ALWAYS DO THE RIGHT THING.
NOK NOK
YES?
UH, HI.
I--UH--WANT YOU TO KNOW--I DON'T KNOW YOUR NAMES, BUT I KNOW WHO YOU ARE... WHY YOU'RE HERE.
AN' THERE'S SOMETHIN'--
--SOMETHIN' I GOTTA TELL YOU.
SON? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
IT'S NOT ME. I'M NOT IMPORTANT. IT'S MY BROTHER. HE'S GONNA KILL A LOT OF PEOPLE.
HE'S THE LEADER OF THOSE GUYS--THE SONS OF THE SERPENT. HE'S GONNA BLOW UP NEW YORK AND L.A. UNLESS YOU STOP HIM.
AN' I...
...I KNOW WHERE HE'S GONNA BE.

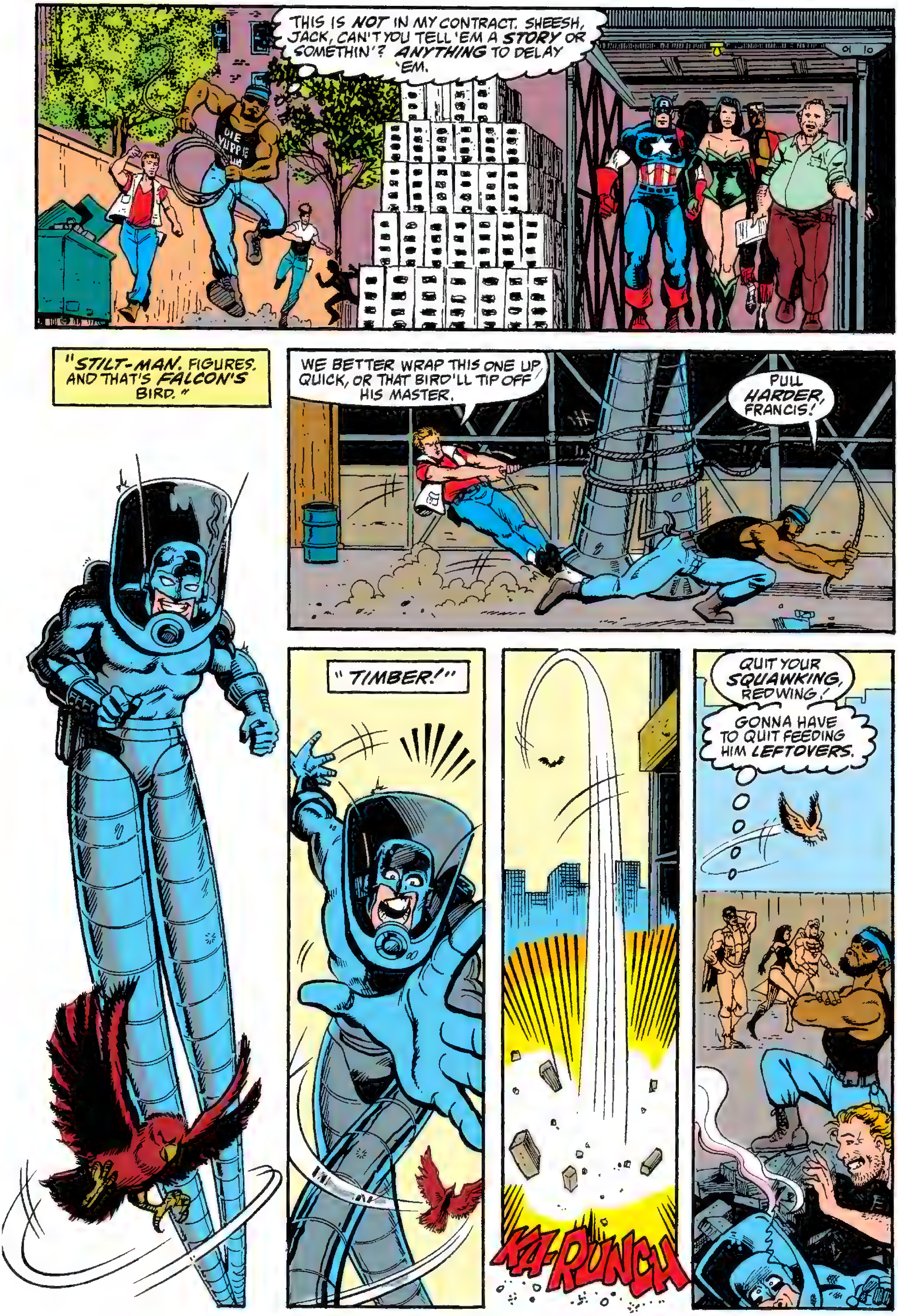

22
M
--APPREHENDED LOCAL BOY LUCAS GREEN, 22, SUSPECTED OF BEING THE RINGLEADER BEHIND THE GROUP SONS OF THE SERPENT...
IT'S TAKEN A LONG TIME, BUT HE'S GOTTEN THEM ALL DOWN.
--WHO FIGURED PROMINENTLY IN THE EVENTS OF THE PAST FEW--
HE PUTS THEM WITH HIS FILES...
IT'S NOT THAT HE DOESN'T LIKE THE AVENGERS ANYMORE; HE STILL DOES...
AND IT'S NOT THAT HE WON'T DO THE RIGHT THING--THE HEROIC THING--IF IT FALLS TO HIM AGAIN.
HE JUST WON'T LOOK FORWARD TO IT ANYMORE. THAT'S ALL.
END.


NEW YORK CITY, AT THE CONSTRUCTION SITE OF THE NEW, NEARLY-COMPLETED AVENGERS MANSION.
A REPRESENTATIVE DELEGATION OF EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES (CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: SERSI, FALCON, SHE-HULK, QUASAR, AND CAPTAIN AMERICA) HAS JUST ARRIVED ON THE SCENE TO OBSERVE THE PROGRESS BEING MADE, GUIDED BY FOREMAN JACK BALE.
AS YOU CAN SEE, WE STILL HAVE A LITTLE TRIMMING TO DO-- SO I CAN'T TAKE YOU INSIDE, BUT WE CAN TAKE A WALK AROUND, IF YOU LIKE...
PLEASE SAY NO, PLEASE SAY NO. JUST HAVIN' THESE GUYS AROUND IS MAKIN' ME NERVOUS. THERE'S ALWAYS TROUBLE WITH THESE SUPER HERO TYPES.
CLOWNING AROUND
WORDS: GRUESOME GARY BARNUM PENCILS: STARVING STEVE BUCCELATO INKS: MIGHTY MICKEY RITTER LETTERS: ROWDY RICK PARKER COLORS: BUCCELATO EDITS: LEN KAMINSKI STRAW BOSS: TOM DEFALCO

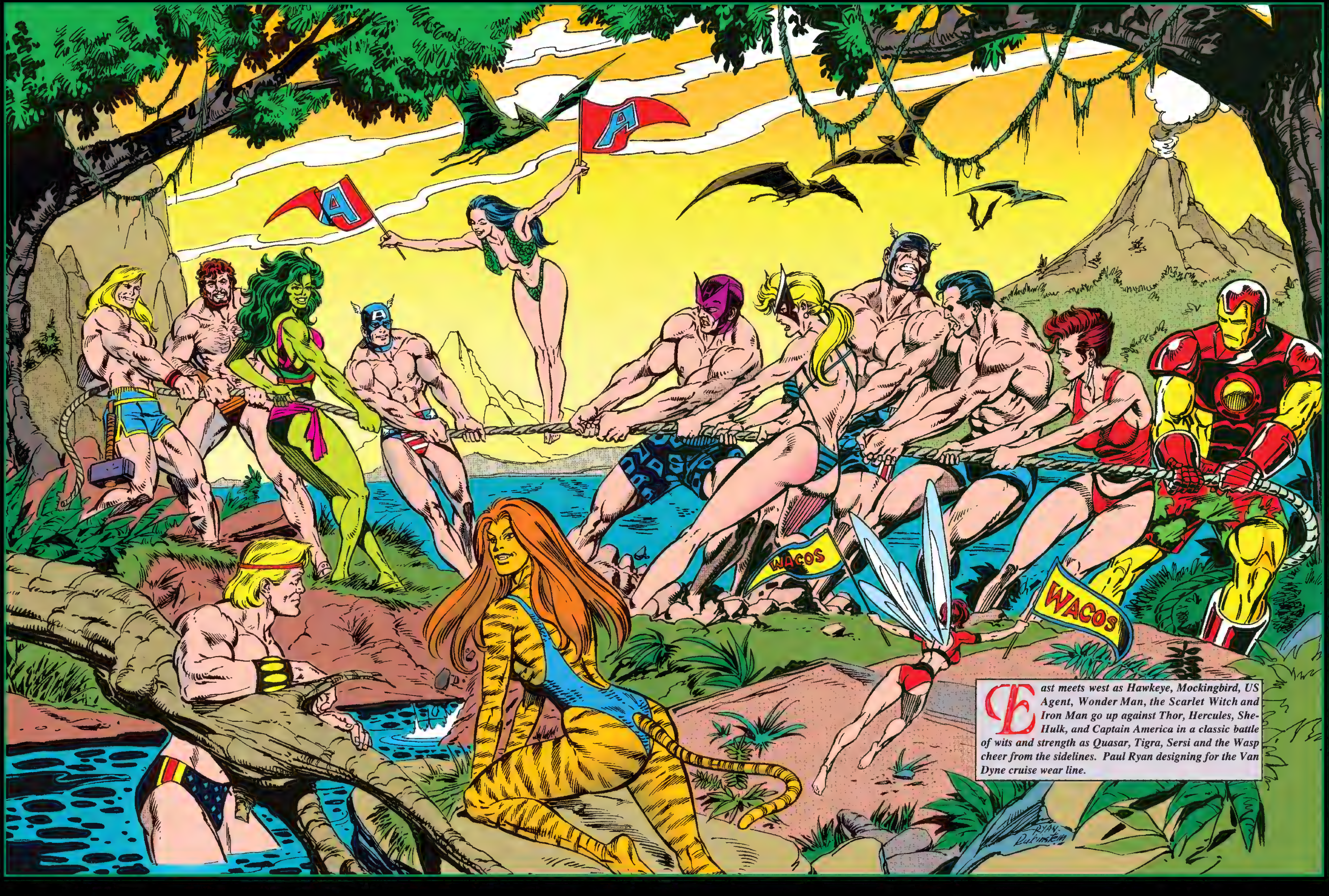

WE'D *LOVE* TO HAVE A LOOK AROUND. I TRUST ALL SAFETY MEASURES ARE BEING OBSERVED BY YOUR MEN?
YO, *FRANCIS*. COFFEE BREAK'S OVER. THE *AVENGERS* JUST SHOWED UP.
DIE YUPPIE SCUM
OH, *PERFECT*. YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THOSE CLOWNS COME AROUND DON'T YOU, PERCY?
YEAH. SOMETHIN' GETS *TRASHED*. AND HERE WE THOUGHT WE WERE JUST ABOUT TO WRAP THIS JOB UP.
MAYBE THEY'LL GET LOST BEFORE ANYTHING HAPPENS.
NO SUCH LUCK. *LOOK*.
"THAT *TREE'S* ABOUT TO GET FRESH WITH *SHE-HULK*."

IT'S THAT *PLANTMAN* NUT!
NAB 'IM BEFORE THE AVENGERS SPOT HIM, START BRAWLING AND RUIN OUR WORK!
WHUMPF!
MR. BALE? DOES THIS BELONG TO--
THWAKASH!
HUH?
...Heh...
...ALMOST LOST MY FAVORITE *WRENCH!*
CONSTRUCTION WORKERS. *ALWAYS* CONSTRUCTION WORKERS.
KLOK


"ANOTHER ONE? THEY'RE CRAWLING OUT OF THE WOODWORK-- LITERALLY."
PORT O SAN
"THAT ONE'S THE WATER WIZARD."
WET
POK
CEMEN
SCUM
I'LL TAKE HIM!
SUCK WET CEMENT, SOGGY!
HMM. MUST BE A FAN. HOPE WE'RE NOT DISTURBING THESE GUYS' WORK...
DIE YUPPIE SCUM
CAUTIO
CEMENT
PERCY! BRING THAT ROPE AROUND TO THE SCAFFOLDING-- AND HURRY!
NOW WHAT?
DIE YUPPIE SCUM
CAUTION: WE
CEMEN


THIS IS NOT IN MY CONTRACT. SHEESH, JACK, CAN'T YOU TELL 'EM A STORY OR SOMETHIN'? ANYTHING TO DELAY 'EM.
DIE YUPPIE
"STILT-MAN, FIGURES. AND THAT'S FALCON'S BIRD."
WE BETTER WRAP THIS ONE UP QUICK, OR THAT BIRD'LL TIP OFF HIS MASTER.
PULL HARDER, FRANCIS!
"TIMBER!"
KA-RUNCH
QUIT YOUR SQUAWKING, REDWING!
GONNA HAVE TO QUIT FEEDING HIM LEFTOVERS.

WELL, I HOPE THAT'S THE END OF-- OH, NO!!
...NOT HIM!!
"NOT THE WRECKER!"
I HELPED WRECK THIS JOINT, AND IT'S GONNA STAY WRECKED.
DOGPILE ON THE WRECKER!
GET HIM!
DON'T LET HIM--
WHERE'S THAT CRANE?
MOMENTS LATER...
NICE WORK, JACK...
IT'S AN HONOR, CAP. SAY, DO YOU REMEMBER BACK IN WORLD WAR TWO...
...BUT I THINK THEY'D ACCOMPLISH MORE IF THEY STOPPED CLOWNING AROUND.
HEY! WHO'S CROWBAR IS THIS? DIDN'T YOU YIPS HEAR WHAT CAP SAID ABOUT SAFETY?
THE END

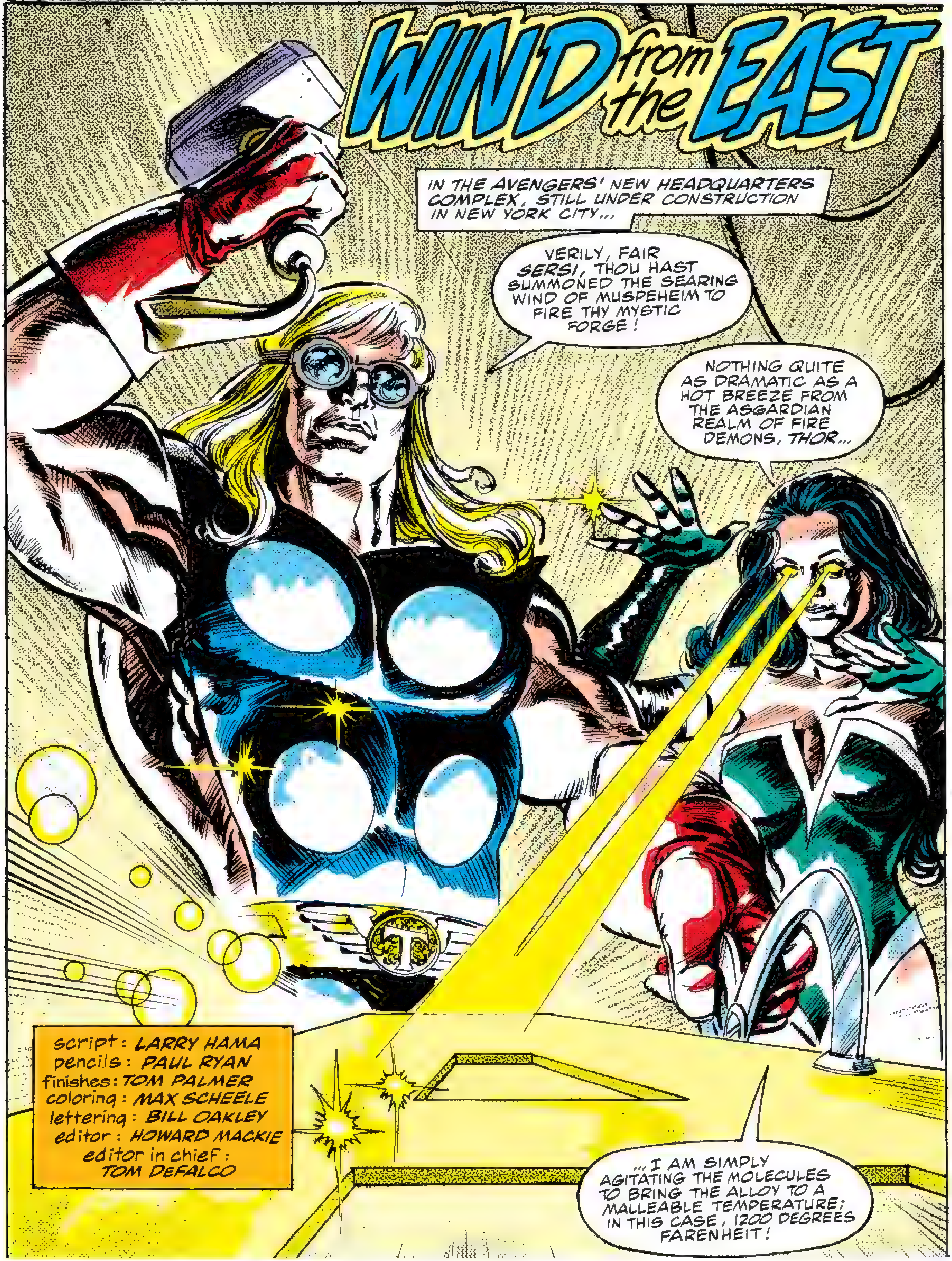


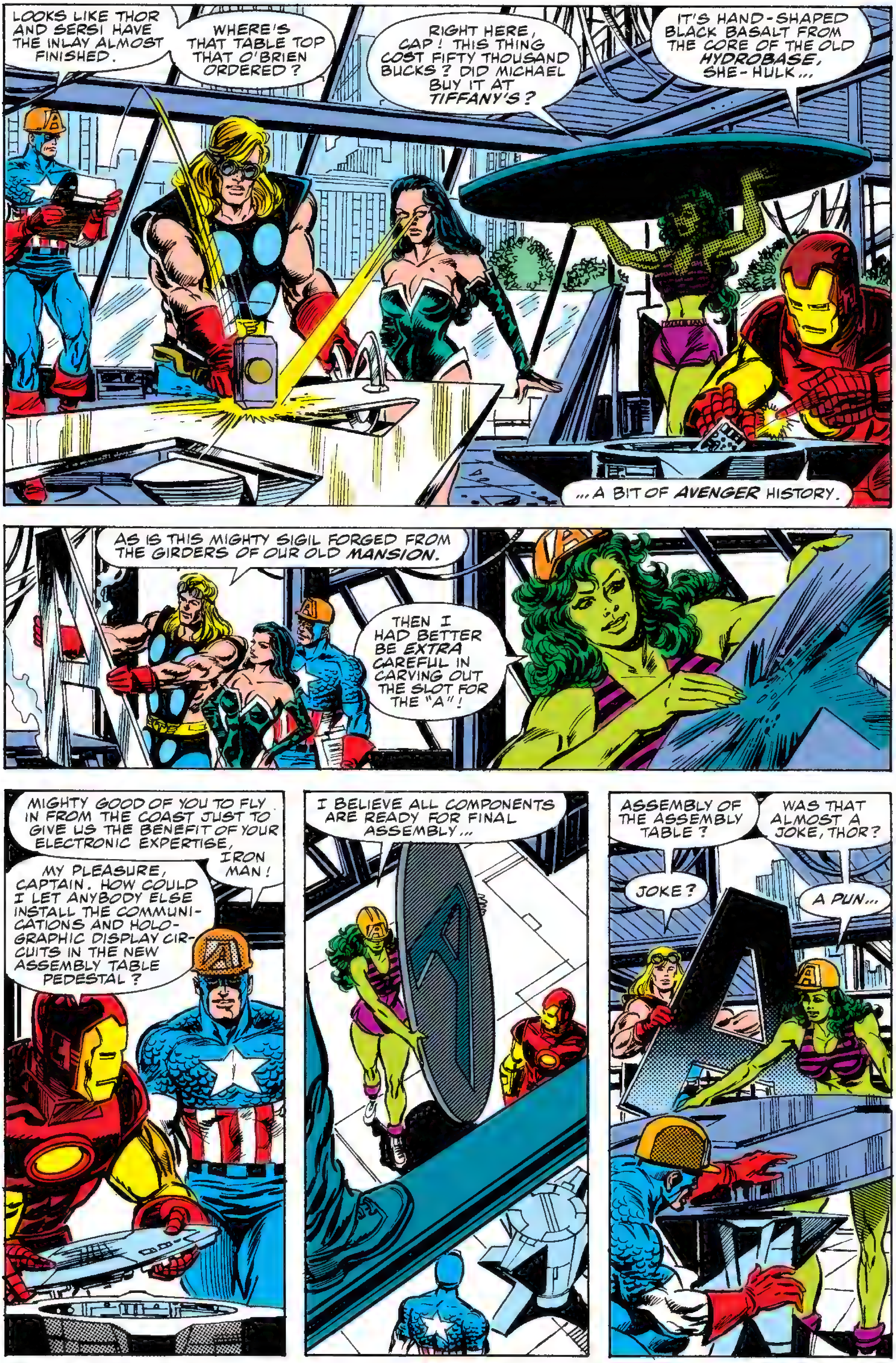
East meets west as Hawkeye, Mockingbird, US Agent, Wonder Man, the Scarlet Witch and Iron Man go up against Thor, Hercules, She-Hulk, and Captain America in a classic battle of wits and strength as Quasar, Tigra, Sersi and the Wasp cheer from the sidelines. Paul Ryan designing for the Van Dyne cruise wear line.

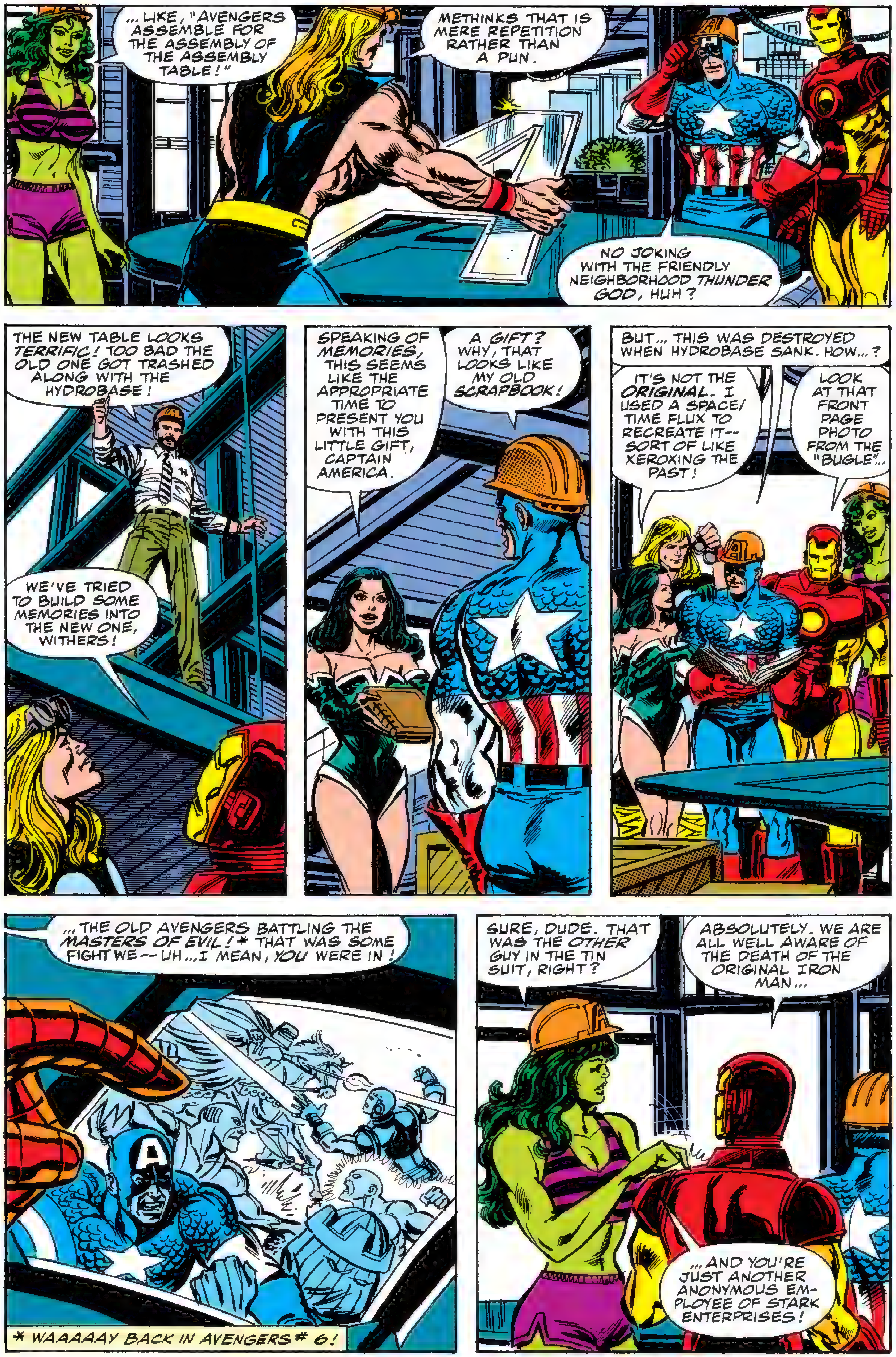
MARVEL ILLUSTRATED: THE SWIMSUIT ISSUE **PINUP BY PAUL RYAN & JOSEF RUBINSTEIN**

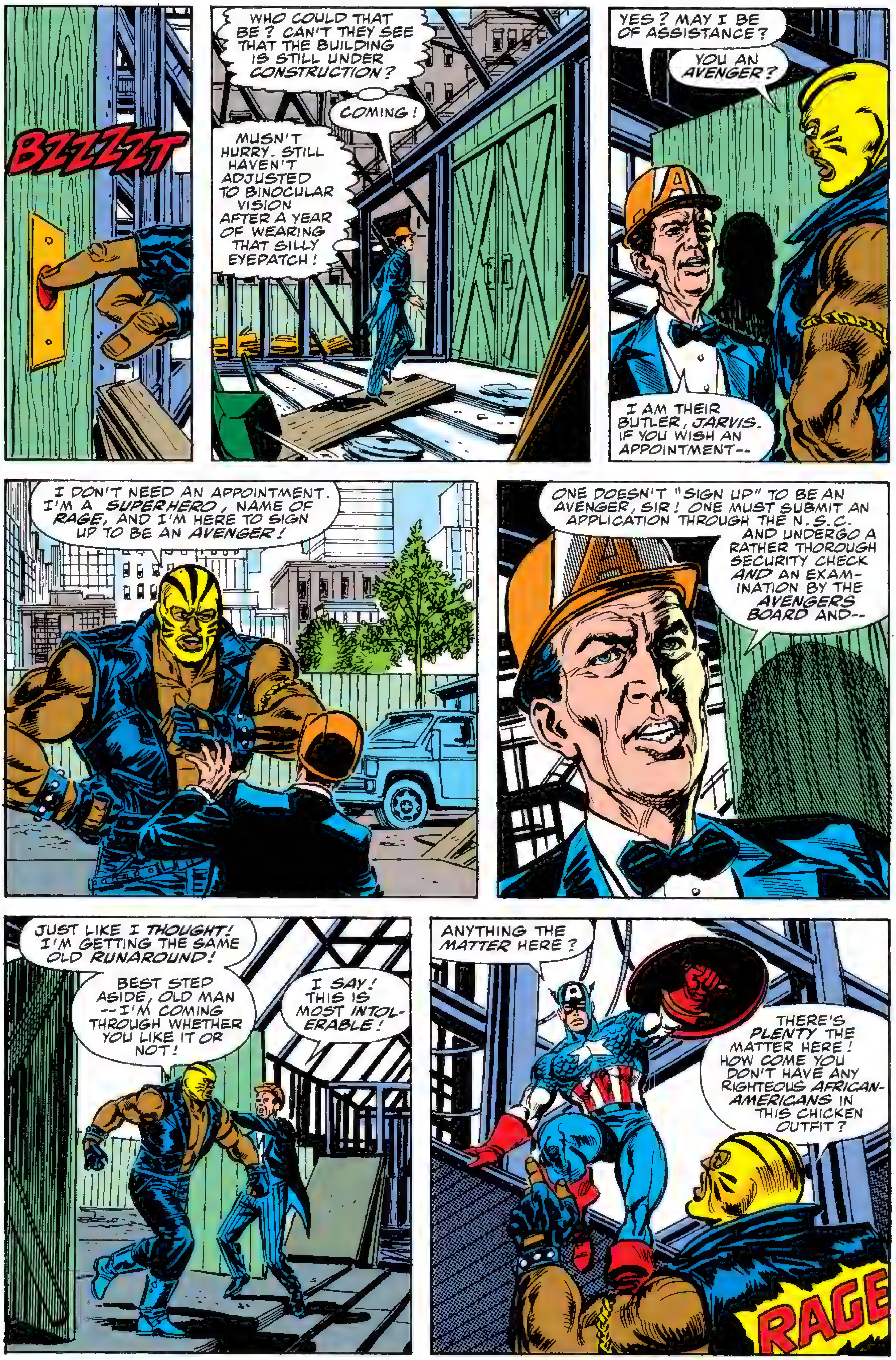
MARVEL COMICS
CAPTAIN AMERICA THOR SERSI VISION SHE-HULK
AVENGERS
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE JUST FOUGHT THEIR NEWEST OPPONENT...
NOW THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN HAS TO PICK UP THE PIECES.
GOOD LUCK, SHELLHEAD.
$1.00 US
$1.25 CAN
326
NOV
UK 60p
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
RYAN '90

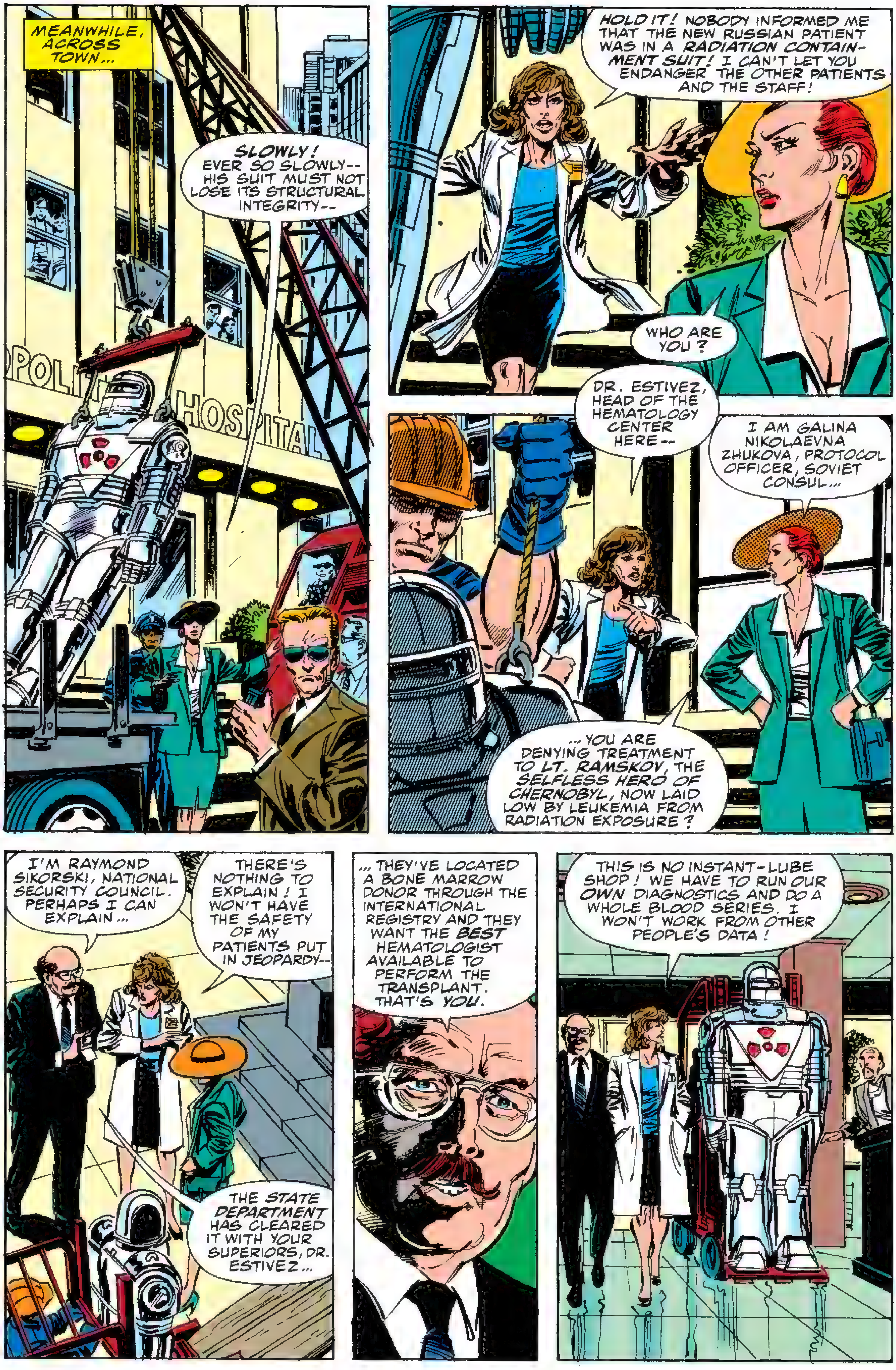
TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND! STAN LEE PRESENTS . . . THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

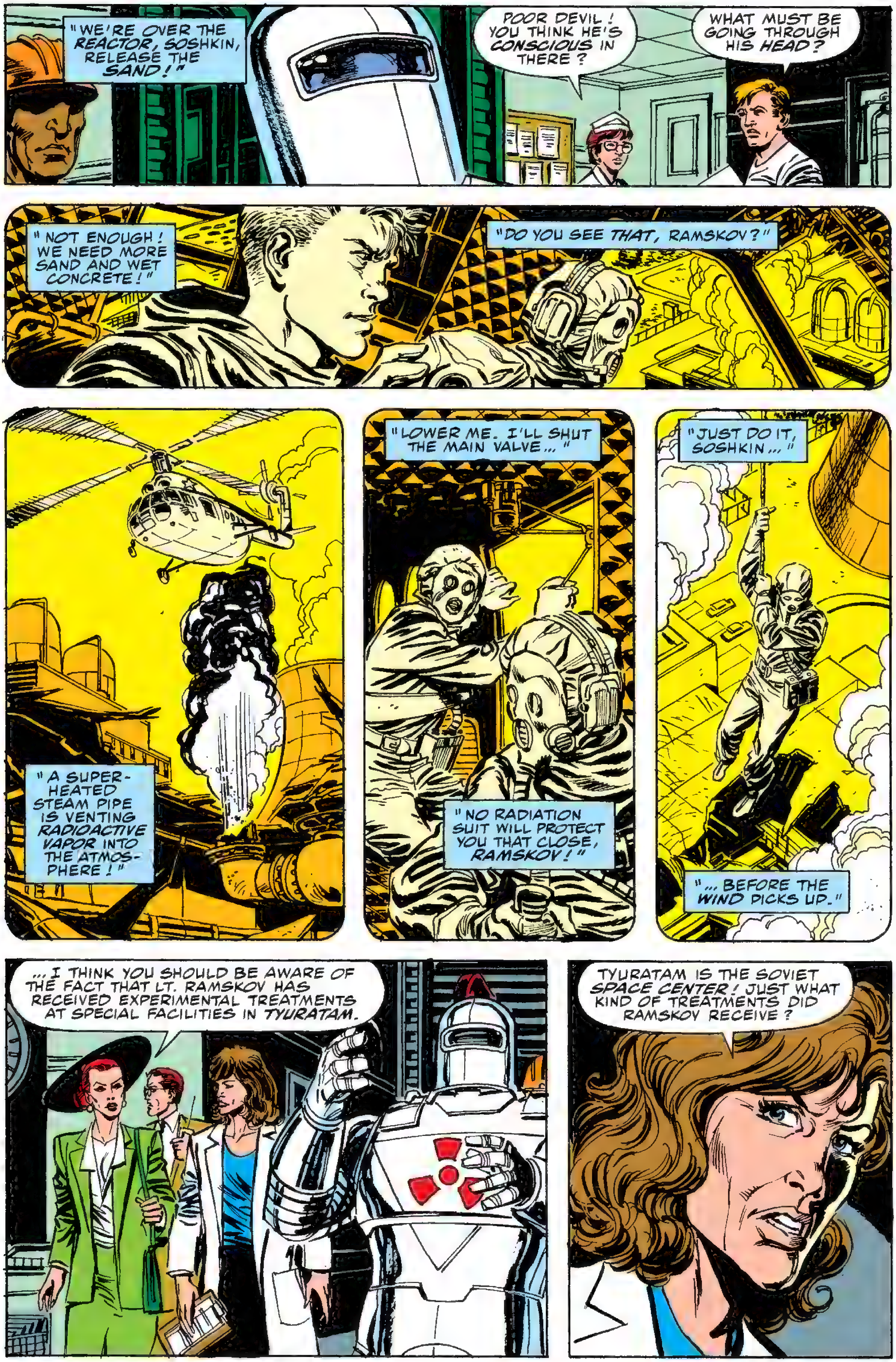

WIND from the EAST
IN THE AVENGERS' NEW HEADQUARTERS COMPLEX, STILL UNDER CONSTRUCTION IN NEW YORK CITY...
VERILY, FAIR SERSI, THOU HAST SUMMONED THE SEARING WIND OF MUSPEHEIM TO FIRE THY MYSTIC FORGE!
NOTHING QUITE AS DRAMATIC AS A HOT BREEZE FROM THE ASGARDIAN REALM OF FIRE DEMONS, THOR...
...I AM SIMPLY AGITATING THE MOLECULES TO BRING THE ALLOY TO A MALLEABLE TEMPERATURE; IN THIS CASE, 1200 DEGREES FARENHEIT!
script: LARRY HAMA
pencils: PAUL RYAN
finishes: TOM PALMER
coloring: MAX SCHEELE
lettering: BILL OAKLEY
editor: HOWARD MACKIE
editor in chief: TOM DEFALCO

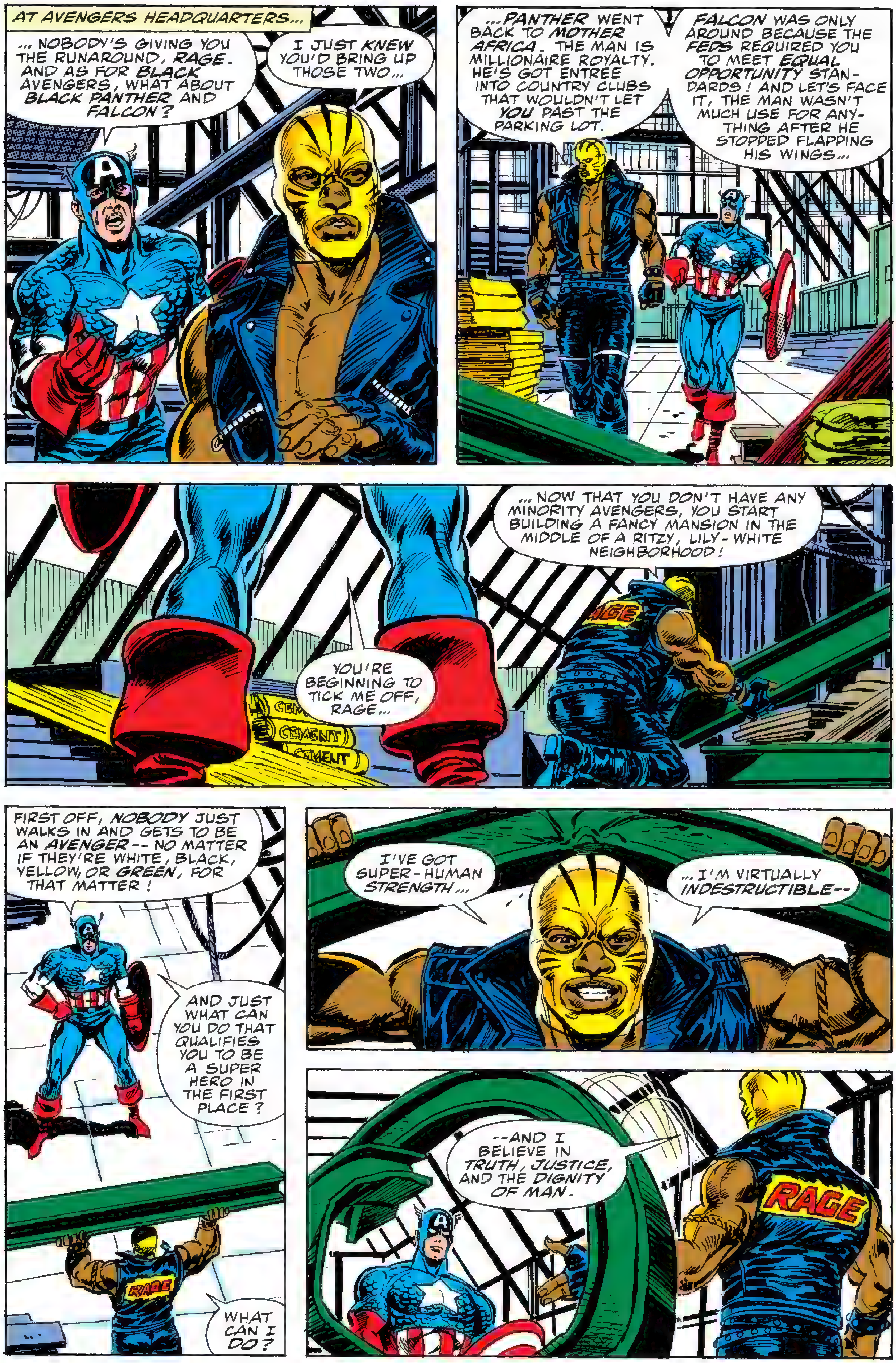

LOOKS LIKE THOR AND SERSI HAVE THE INLAY ALMOST FINISHED.
WHERE'S THAT TABLE TOP THAT O'BRIEN ORDERED?
RIGHT HERE, CAP! THIS THING COST FIFTY THOUSAND BUCKS? DID MICHAEL BUY IT AT *TIFFANY'S*?
IT'S HAND-SHAPED BLACK BASALT FROM THE CORE OF THE OLD *HYDROBASE*, SHE-HULK...
...A BIT OF *AVENGER* HISTORY.
AS IS THIS MIGHTY SIGIL FORGED FROM THE GIRDERS OF OUR OLD *MANSION*.
THEN I HAD BETTER BE *EXTRA* CAREFUL IN CARVING OUT THE SLOT FOR THE "A"!
MIGHTY GOOD OF YOU TO FLY IN FROM THE COAST JUST TO GIVE US THE BENEFIT OF YOUR ELECTRONIC EXPERTISE, IRON MAN!
MY PLEASURE, CAPTAIN. HOW COULD I LET ANYBODY ELSE INSTALL THE COMMUNICATIONS AND HOLOGRAPHIC DISPLAY CIRCUITS IN THE NEW ASSEMBLY TABLE PEDESTAL?
I BELIEVE ALL COMPONENTS ARE READY FOR FINAL ASSEMBLY...
ASSEMBLY OF THE ASSEMBLY TABLE?
WAS THAT ALMOST A JOKE, THOR?
JOKE?
A *PUN*...

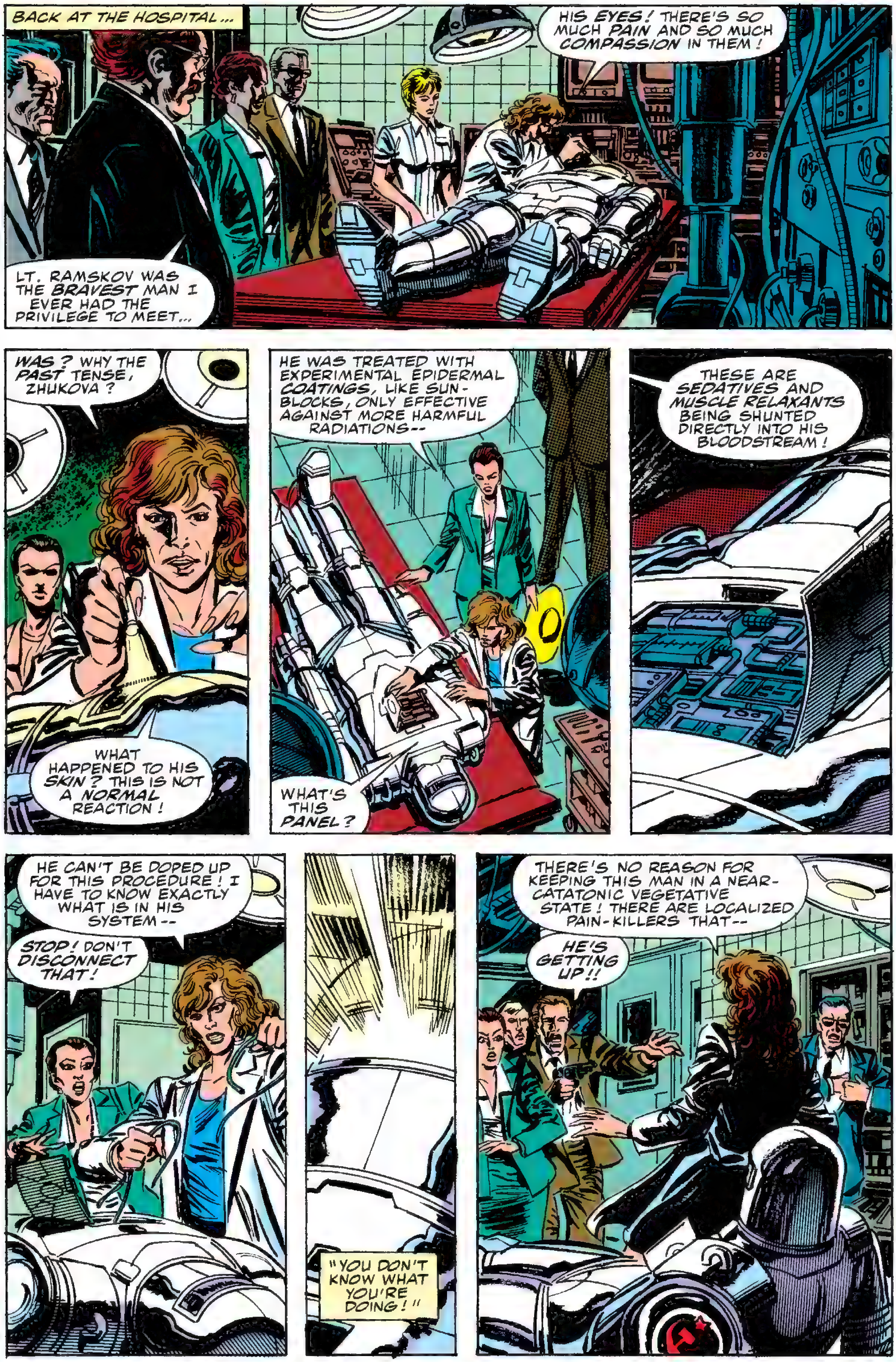

...LIKE, "AVENGERS ASSEMBLE FOR THE ASSEMBLY OF THE ASSEMBLY TABLE!"
METHINKS THAT IS MERE REPETITION RATHER THAN A PUN.
NO JOKING WITH THE FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD *THUNDER GOD*, HUH?
THE NEW TABLE LOOKS *TERRIFIC!* TOO BAD THE OLD ONE GOT TRASHED ALONG WITH THE HYDROBASE!
WE'VE TRIED TO BUILD SOME MEMORIES INTO THE NEW ONE, WITHERS!
SPEAKING OF *MEMORIES*, THIS SEEMS LIKE THE APPROPRIATE TIME TO PRESENT YOU WITH THIS LITTLE GIFT, CAPTAIN AMERICA.
A *GIFT?* WHY, THAT LOOKS LIKE MY OLD *SCRAPBOOK!*
BUT... THIS WAS DESTROYED WHEN HYDROBASE SANK. HOW...?
IT'S NOT THE *ORIGINAL*. I USED A SPACE/TIME FLUX TO RECREATE IT-- SORT OF LIKE XEROXING THE PAST!
LOOK AT THAT FRONT PAGE PHOTO FROM THE "BUGLE"...
...THE OLD AVENGERS BATTLING THE *MASTERS OF EVIL!** THAT WAS SOME FIGHT WE-- UH... I MEAN, *YOU* WERE IN!
* WAAAAAY BACK IN AVENGERS # 6!
SURE, DUDE. THAT WAS THE *OTHER* GUY IN THE TIN SUIT, RIGHT?
ABSOLUTELY. WE ARE ALL WELL AWARE OF THE DEATH OF THE ORIGINAL IRON MAN...
...AND YOU'RE JUST ANOTHER ANONYMOUS EMPLOYEE OF STARK ENTERPRISES!

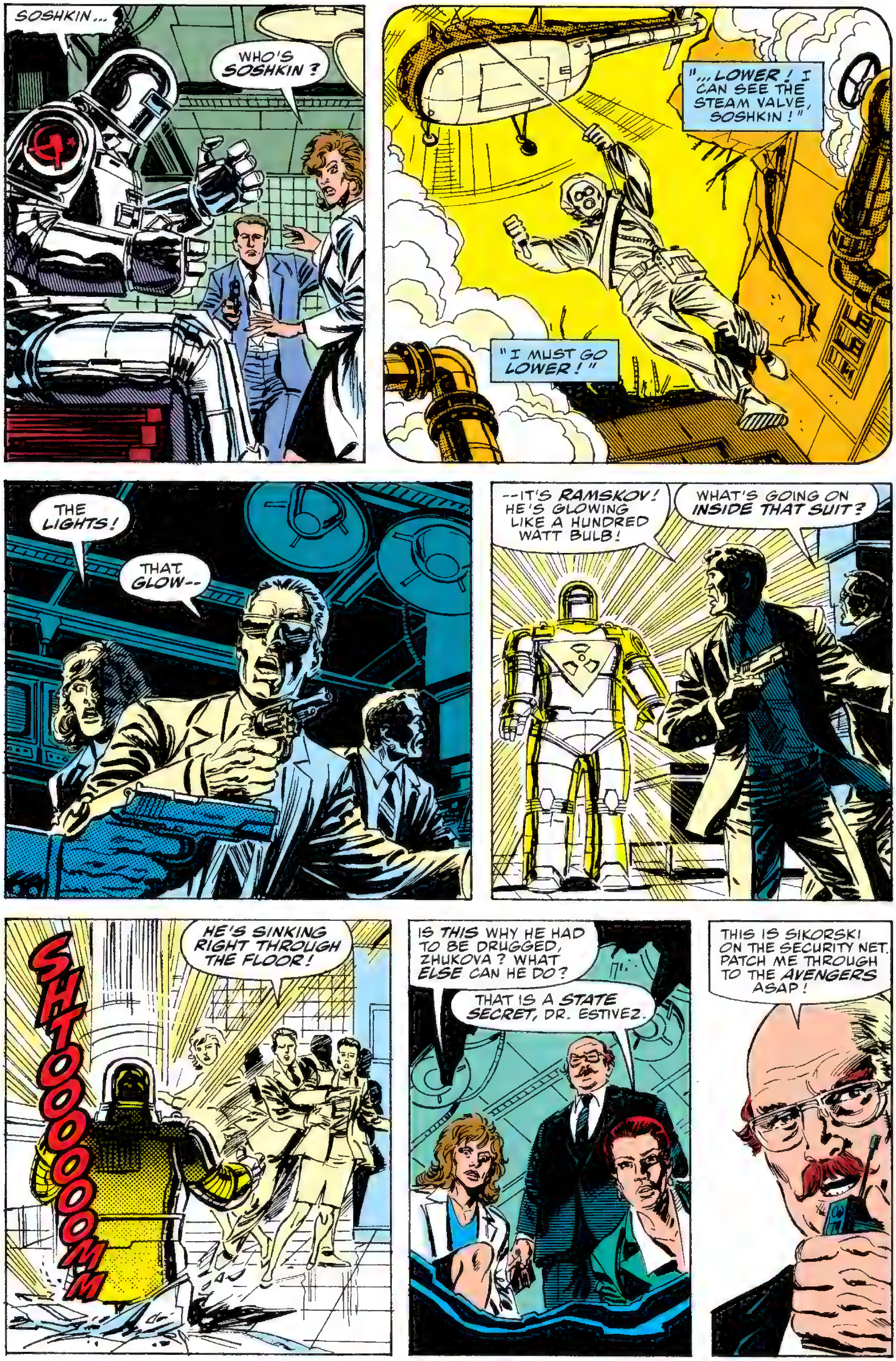

BZZZZT
WHO COULD THAT BE? CAN'T THEY SEE THAT THE BUILDING IS STILL UNDER CONSTRUCTION?
COMING!
MUSN'T HURRY. STILL HAVEN'T ADJUSTED TO BINOCULAR VISION AFTER A YEAR OF WEARING THAT SILLY EYEPATCH!
YES? MAY I BE OF ASSISTANCE?
YOU AN AVENGER?
I AM THEIR BUTLER, JARVIS. IF YOU WISH AN APPOINTMENT--
I DON'T NEED AN APPOINTMENT. I'M A SUPERHERO, NAME OF RAGE, AND I'M HERE TO SIGN UP TO BE AN AVENGER!
ONE DOESN'T "SIGN UP" TO BE AN AVENGER, SIR! ONE MUST SUBMIT AN APPLICATION THROUGH THE N.S.C. AND UNDERGO A RATHER THOROUGH SECURITY CHECK AND AN EXAMINATION BY THE AVENGERS BOARD AND--
JUST LIKE I THOUGHT! I'M GETTING THE SAME OLD RUNAROUND!
BEST STEP ASIDE, OLD MAN --I'M COMING THROUGH WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT!
I SAY! THIS IS MOST INTOLERABLE!
ANYTHING THE MATTER HERE?
THERE'S PLENTY THE MATTER HERE! HOW COME YOU DON'T HAVE ANY RIGHTEOUS AFRICAN-AMERICANS IN THIS CHICKEN OUTFIT?
RAGE

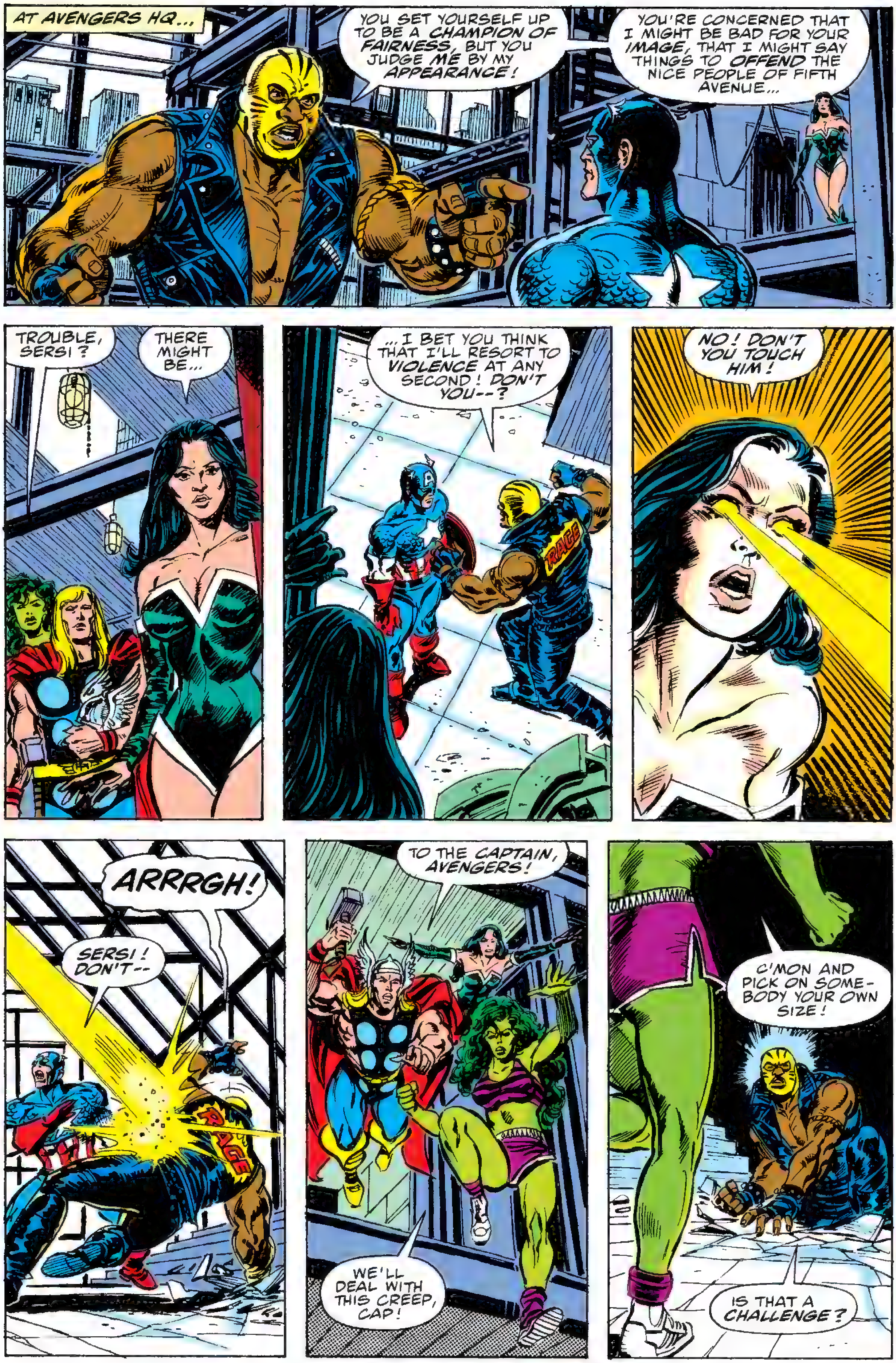

MEANWHILE, ACROSS TOWN...
SLOWLY! EVER SO SLOWLY-- HIS SUIT MUST NOT LOSE ITS STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY--
POLI HOSPITAL
HOLD IT! NOBODY INFORMED ME THAT THE NEW RUSSIAN PATIENT WAS IN A RADIATION CONTAINMENT SUIT! I CAN'T LET YOU ENDANGER THE OTHER PATIENTS AND THE STAFF!
WHO ARE YOU?
DR. ESTIVEZ, HEAD OF THE HEMATOLOGY CENTER HERE--
I AM GALINA NIKOLAEVNA ZHUKOVA, PROTOCOL OFFICER, SOVIET CONSUL...
...YOU ARE DENYING TREATMENT TO LT. RAMSKOV, THE SELFLESS HERO OF CHERNOBYL, NOW LAID LOW BY LEUKEMIA FROM RADIATION EXPOSURE?
I'M RAYMOND SIKORSKI, NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL. PERHAPS I CAN EXPLAIN...
THERE'S NOTHING TO EXPLAIN! I WON'T HAVE THE SAFETY OF MY PATIENTS PUT IN JEOPARDY--
THE STATE DEPARTMENT HAS CLEARED IT WITH YOUR SUPERIORS, DR. ESTIVEZ...
...THEY'VE LOCATED A BONE MARROW DONOR THROUGH THE INTERNATIONAL REGISTRY AND THEY WANT THE BEST HEMATOLOGIST AVAILABLE TO PERFORM THE TRANSPLANT. THAT'S YOU.
THIS IS NO INSTANT-LUBE SHOP! WE HAVE TO RUN OUR OWN DIAGNOSTICS AND DO A WHOLE BLOOD SERIES. I WON'T WORK FROM OTHER PEOPLE'S DATA!

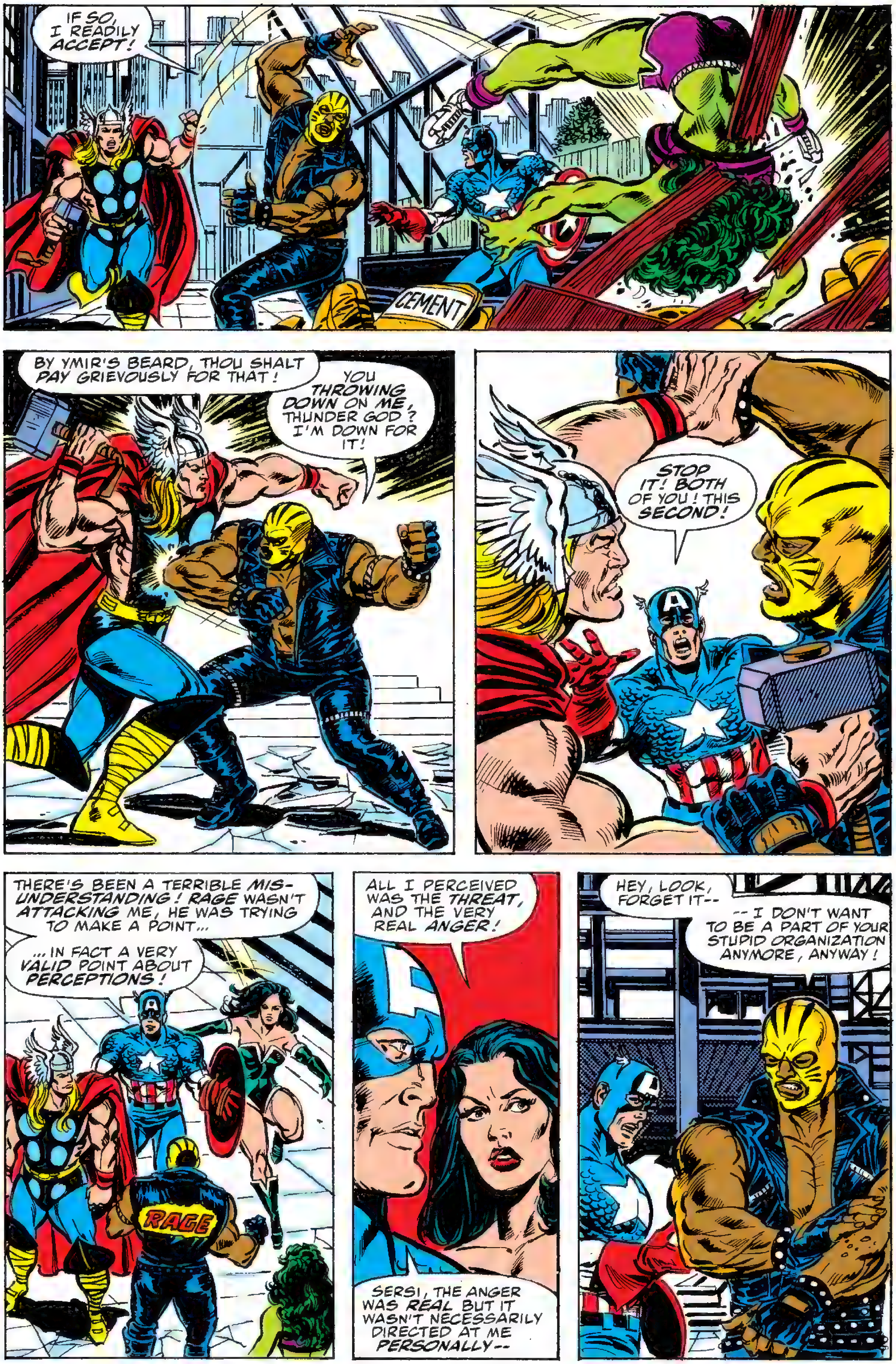

"WE'RE OVER THE *REACTOR*, SOSHKIN, RELEASE THE *SAND!*"
POOR DEVIL! YOU THINK HE'S *CONSCIOUS* IN THERE?
WHAT MUST BE GOING THROUGH HIS *HEAD?*
"NOT ENOUGH! WE NEED MORE SAND AND WET CONCRETE!"
"DO YOU SEE *THAT*, RAMSKOV?"
"A SUPER-HEATED STEAM PIPE IS VENTING *RADIOACTIVE VAPOR* INTO THE ATMOSPHERE!"
"LOWER ME. I'LL SHUT THE MAIN VALVE..."
"NO RADIATION SUIT WILL PROTECT YOU THAT CLOSE, *RAMSKOV!*"
"JUST DO IT, SOSHKIN..."
"...BEFORE THE *WIND* PICKS UP."
...I THINK YOU SHOULD BE AWARE OF THE FACT THAT LT. RAMSKOV HAS RECEIVED EXPERIMENTAL TREATMENTS AT SPECIAL FACILITIES IN *TYURATAM.*
TYURATAM IS THE SOVIET *SPACE CENTER!* JUST WHAT KIND OF TREATMENTS DID RAMSKOV RECEIVE?

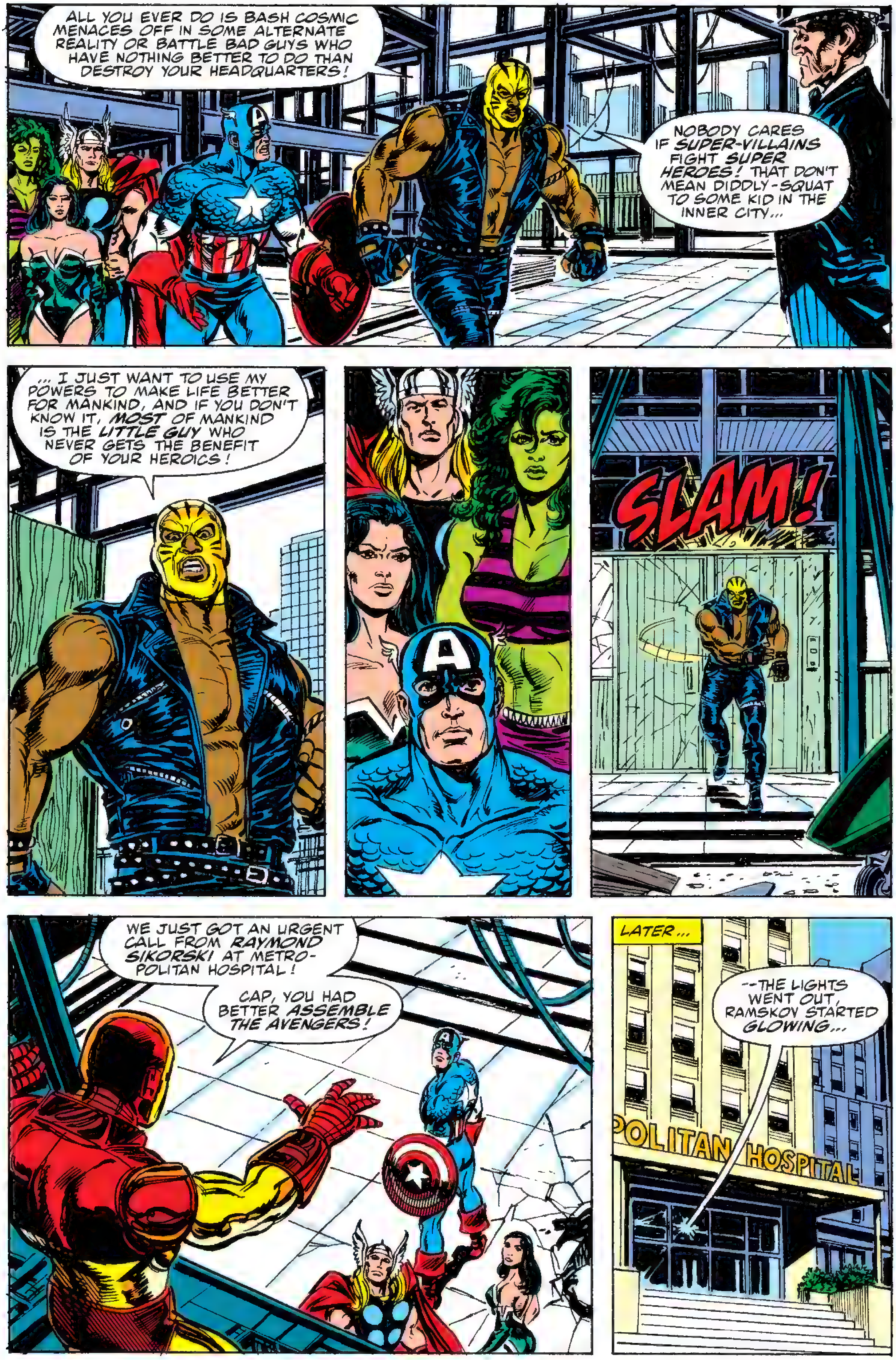

AT AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS...
... NOBODY'S GIVING YOU THE RUNAROUND, RAGE. AND AS FOR BLACK AVENGERS, WHAT ABOUT BLACK PANTHER AND FALCON?
I JUST KNEW YOU'D BRING UP THOSE TWO...
...PANTHER WENT BACK TO MOTHER AFRICA. THE MAN IS MILLIONAIRE ROYALTY. HE'S GOT ENTREE INTO COUNTRY CLUBS THAT WOULDN'T LET YOU PAST THE PARKING LOT.
FALCON WAS ONLY AROUND BECAUSE THE FEDS REQUIRED YOU TO MEET EQUAL OPPORTUNITY STANDARDS! AND LET'S FACE IT, THE MAN WASN'T MUCH USE FOR ANYTHING AFTER HE STOPPED FLAPPING HIS WINGS...
... NOW THAT YOU DON'T HAVE ANY MINORITY AVENGERS, YOU START BUILDING A FANCY MANSION IN THE MIDDLE OF A RITZY, LILY-WHITE NEIGHBORHOOD!
YOU'RE BEGINNING TO TICK ME OFF, RAGE...
CEMENT
CEMENT
CEMENT
RAGE
FIRST OFF, NOBODY JUST WALKS IN AND GETS TO BE AN AVENGER -- NO MATTER IF THEY'RE WHITE, BLACK, YELLOW, OR GREEN, FOR THAT MATTER!
AND JUST WHAT CAN YOU DO THAT QUALIFIES YOU TO BE A SUPER HERO IN THE FIRST PLACE?
RAGE
WHAT CAN I DO?
I'VE GOT SUPER-HUMAN STRENGTH...
... I'M VIRTUALLY INDESTRUCTIBLE--
--AND I BELIEVE IN TRUTH, JUSTICE, AND THE DIGNITY OF MAN.
RAGE

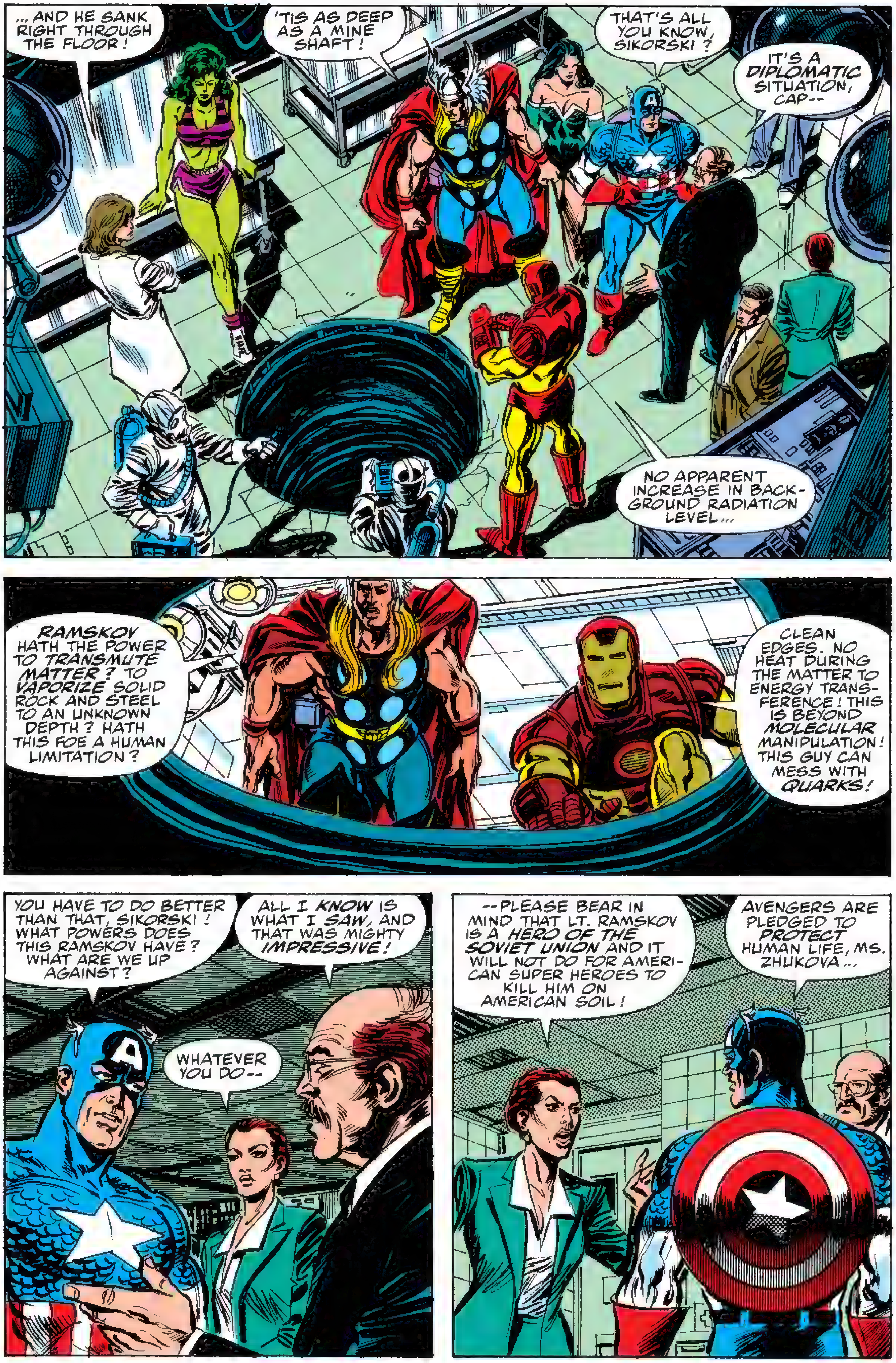

BACK AT THE HOSPITAL...
HIS EYES! THERE'S SO MUCH PAIN AND SO MUCH COMPASSION IN THEM!
LT. RAMSKOV WAS THE BRAVEST MAN I EVER HAD THE PRIVILEGE TO MEET...
WAS? WHY THE PAST TENSE, ZHUKOVA?
WHAT HAPPENED TO HIS SKIN? THIS IS NOT A NORMAL REACTION!
HE WAS TREATED WITH EXPERIMENTAL EPIDERMAL COATINGS, LIKE SUN-BLOCKS, ONLY EFFECTIVE AGAINST MORE HARMFUL RADIATIONS--
WHAT'S THIS PANEL?
THESE ARE SEDATIVES AND MUSCLE RELAXANTS BEING SHUNTED DIRECTLY INTO HIS BLOODSTREAM!
HE CAN'T BE DOPED UP FOR THIS PROCEDURE! I HAVE TO KNOW EXACTLY WHAT IS IN HIS SYSTEM--
STOP! DON'T DISCONNECT THAT!
"YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING!"
THERE'S NO REASON FOR KEEPING THIS MAN IN A NEAR-CATATONIC VEGETATIVE STATE! THERE ARE LOCALIZED PAIN-KILLERS THAT--
HE'S GETTING UP!!

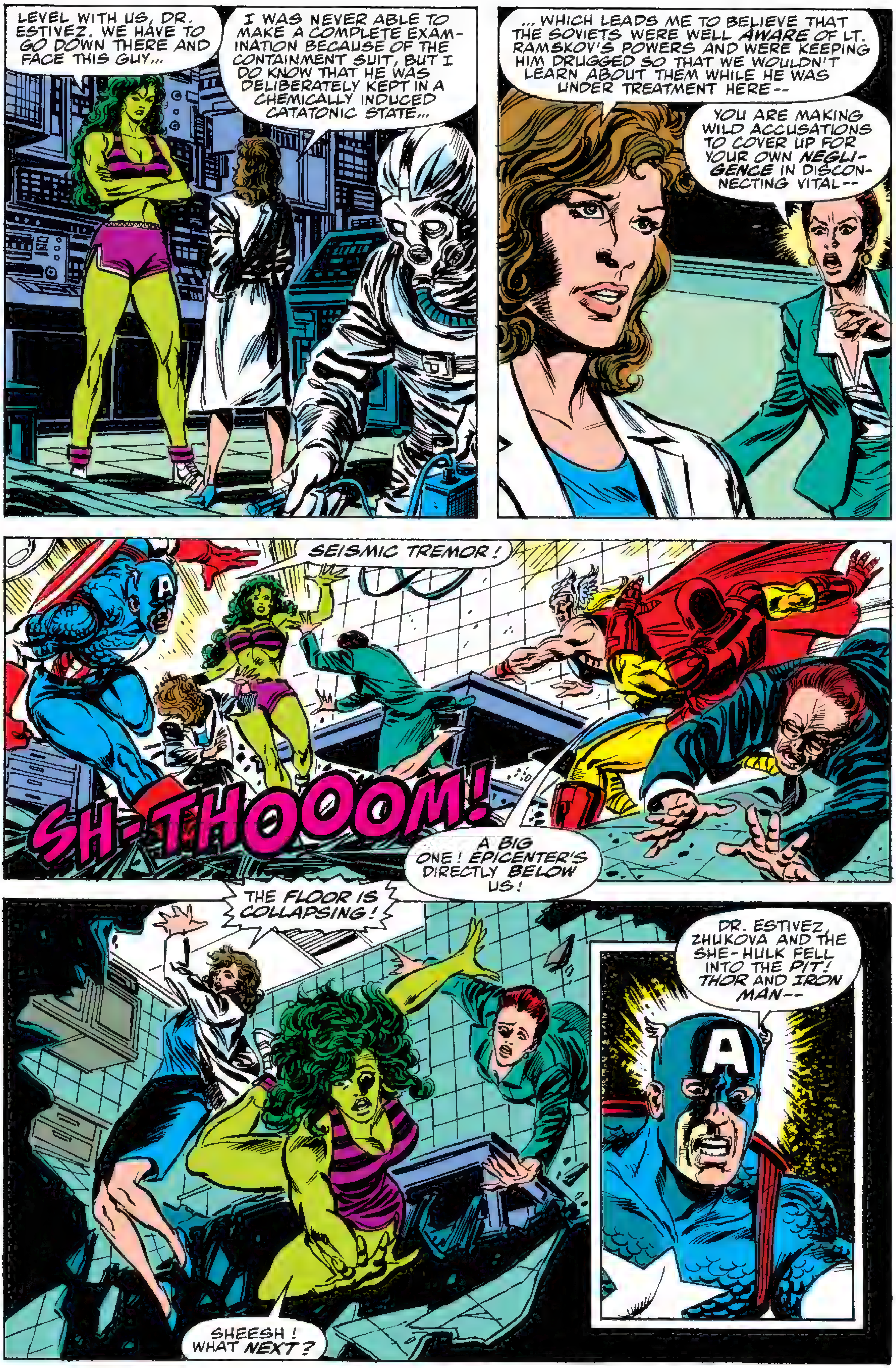

SOSHKIN...
WHO'S SOSHKIN?
"...LOWER! I CAN SEE THE STEAM VALVE, SOSHKIN!"
"I MUST GO LOWER!"
THE LIGHTS!
THAT GLOW--
--IT'S RAMSKOV! HE'S GLOWING LIKE A HUNDRED WATT BULB!
WHAT'S GOING ON INSIDE THAT SUIT?
SHTOOOOOOOM
HE'S SINKING RIGHT THROUGH THE FLOOR!
IS THIS WHY HE HAD TO BE DRUGGED, ZHUKOVA? WHAT ELSE CAN HE DO?
THAT IS A STATE SECRET, DR. ESTIVEZ.
THIS IS SIKORSKI ON THE SECURITY NET. PATCH ME THROUGH TO THE AVENGERS ASAP!

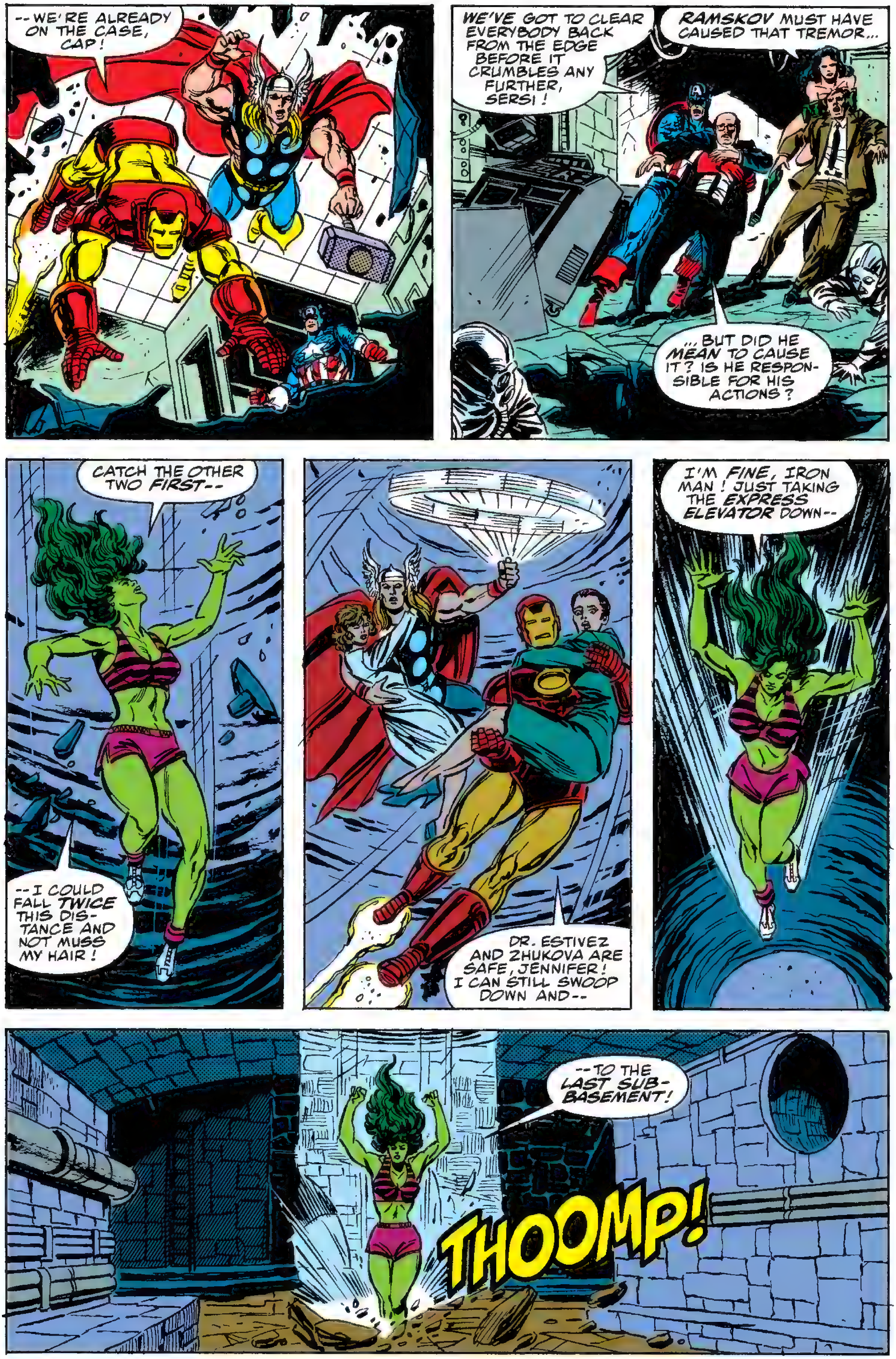

AT AVENGERS HQ...
YOU SET YOURSELF UP TO BE A CHAMPION OF FAIRNESS, BUT YOU JUDGE ME BY MY APPEARANCE!
YOU'RE CONCERNED THAT I MIGHT BE BAD FOR YOUR IMAGE, THAT I MIGHT SAY THINGS TO OFFEND THE NICE PEOPLE OF FIFTH AVENUE...
TROUBLE, SERSI?
THERE MIGHT BE...
...I BET YOU THINK THAT I'LL RESORT TO VIOLENCE AT ANY SECOND! DON'T YOU--?
RAGE
NO! DON'T YOU TOUCH HIM!
ARRRGH!
SERSI! DON'T--
RAGE
TO THE CAPTAIN, AVENGERS!
WE'LL DEAL WITH THIS CREEP, CAP!
C'MON AND PICK ON SOMEBODY YOUR OWN SIZE!
IS THAT A CHALLENGE?

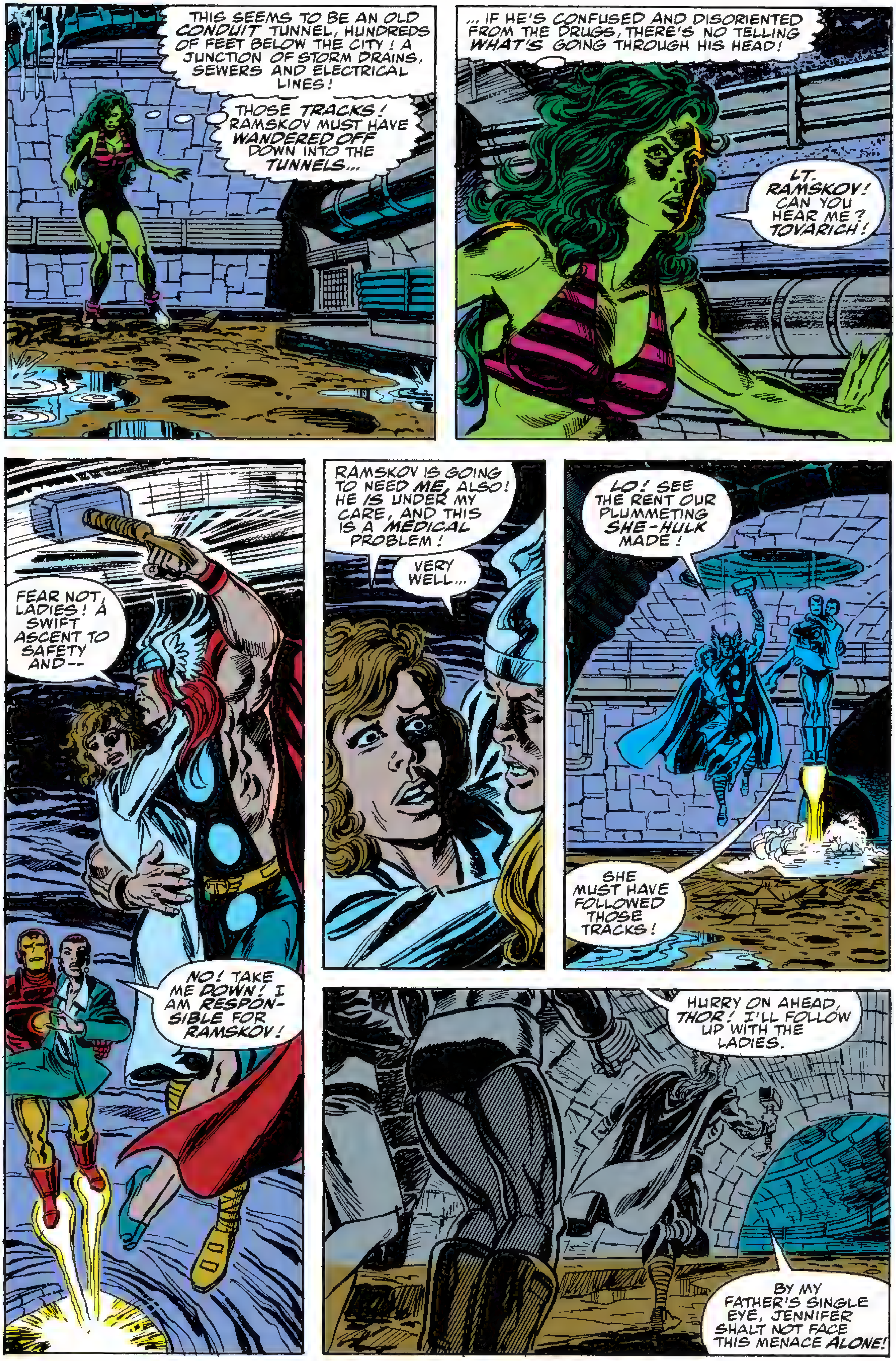

IF SO, I READILY ACCEPT!
CEMENT
BY YMIR'S BEARD, THOU SHALT PAY GRIEVOUSLY FOR THAT!
YOU THROWING DOWN ON ME, THUNDER GOD? I'M DOWN FOR IT!
STOP IT! BOTH OF YOU! THIS SECOND!
THERE'S BEEN A TERRIBLE MISUNDERSTANDING! RAGE WASN'T ATTACKING ME, HE WAS TRYING TO MAKE A POINT...
...IN FACT A VERY VALID POINT ABOUT PERCEPTIONS!
RAGE
ALL I PERCEIVED WAS THE THREAT, AND THE VERY REAL ANGER!
SERSI, THE ANGER WAS REAL BUT IT WASN'T NECESSARILY DIRECTED AT ME PERSONALLY--
HEY, LOOK, FORGET IT--
--I DON'T WANT TO BE A PART OF YOUR STUPID ORGANIZATION ANYMORE, ANYWAY!

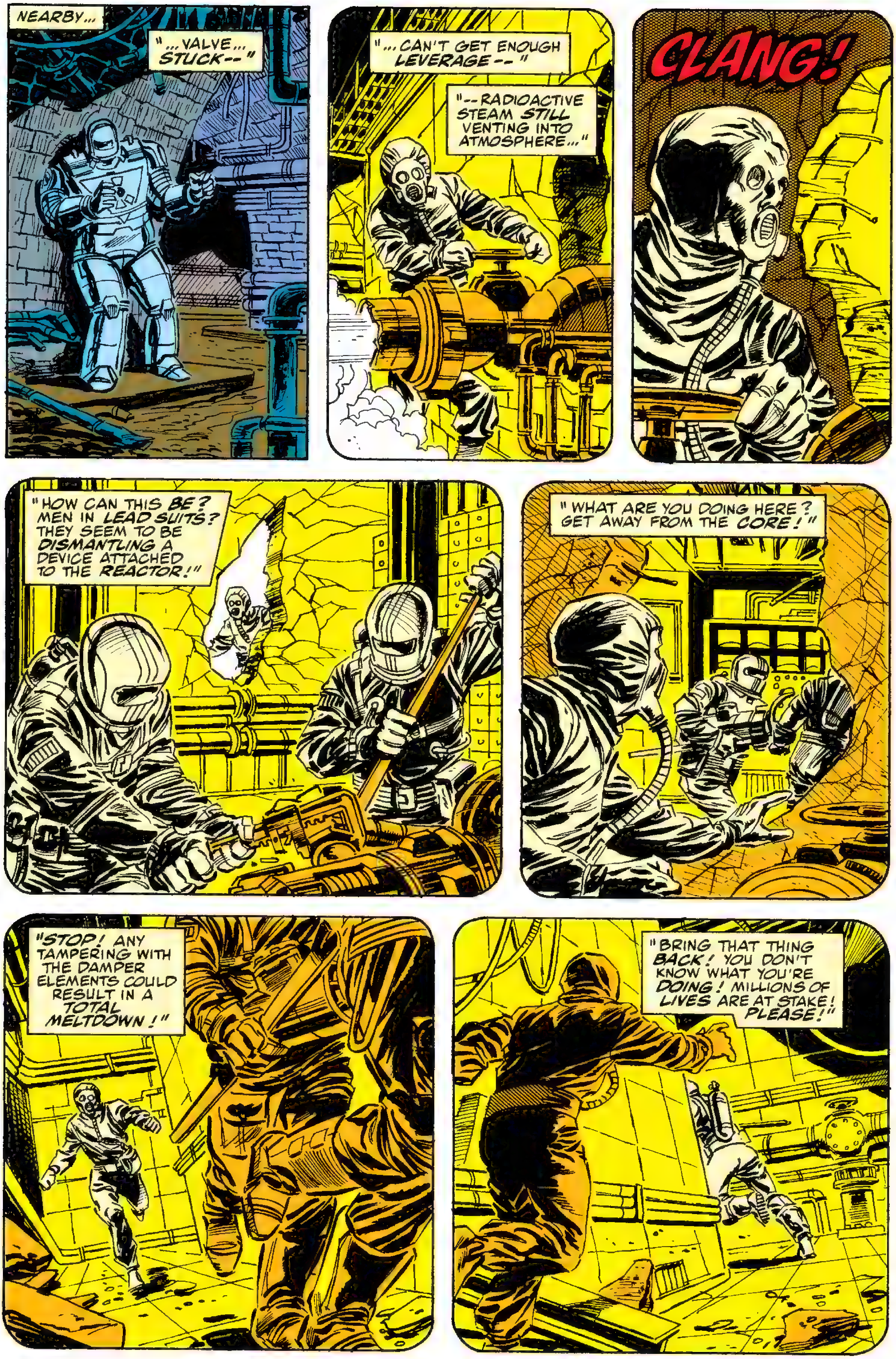

ALL YOU EVER DO IS BASH COSMIC MENACES OFF IN SOME ALTERNATE REALITY OR BATTLE BAD GUYS WHO HAVE NOTHING BETTER TO DO THAN DESTROY YOUR HEADQUARTERS!
NOBODY CARES IF SUPER-VILLAINS FIGHT SUPER HEROES! THAT DON'T MEAN DIDDLY-SQUAT TO SOME KID IN THE INNER CITY...
...I JUST WANT TO USE MY POWERS TO MAKE LIFE BETTER FOR MANKIND, AND IF YOU DON'T KNOW IT, MOST OF MANKIND IS THE LITTLE GUY WHO NEVER GETS THE BENEFIT OF YOUR HEROICS!
SLAM!
WE JUST GOT AN URGENT CALL FROM RAYMOND SIKORSKI AT METROPOLITAN HOSPITAL!
CAP, YOU HAD BETTER ASSEMBLE THE AVENGERS!
LATER...
POLITAN HOSPITAL
--THE LIGHTS WENT OUT, RAMSKOV STARTED GLOWING...

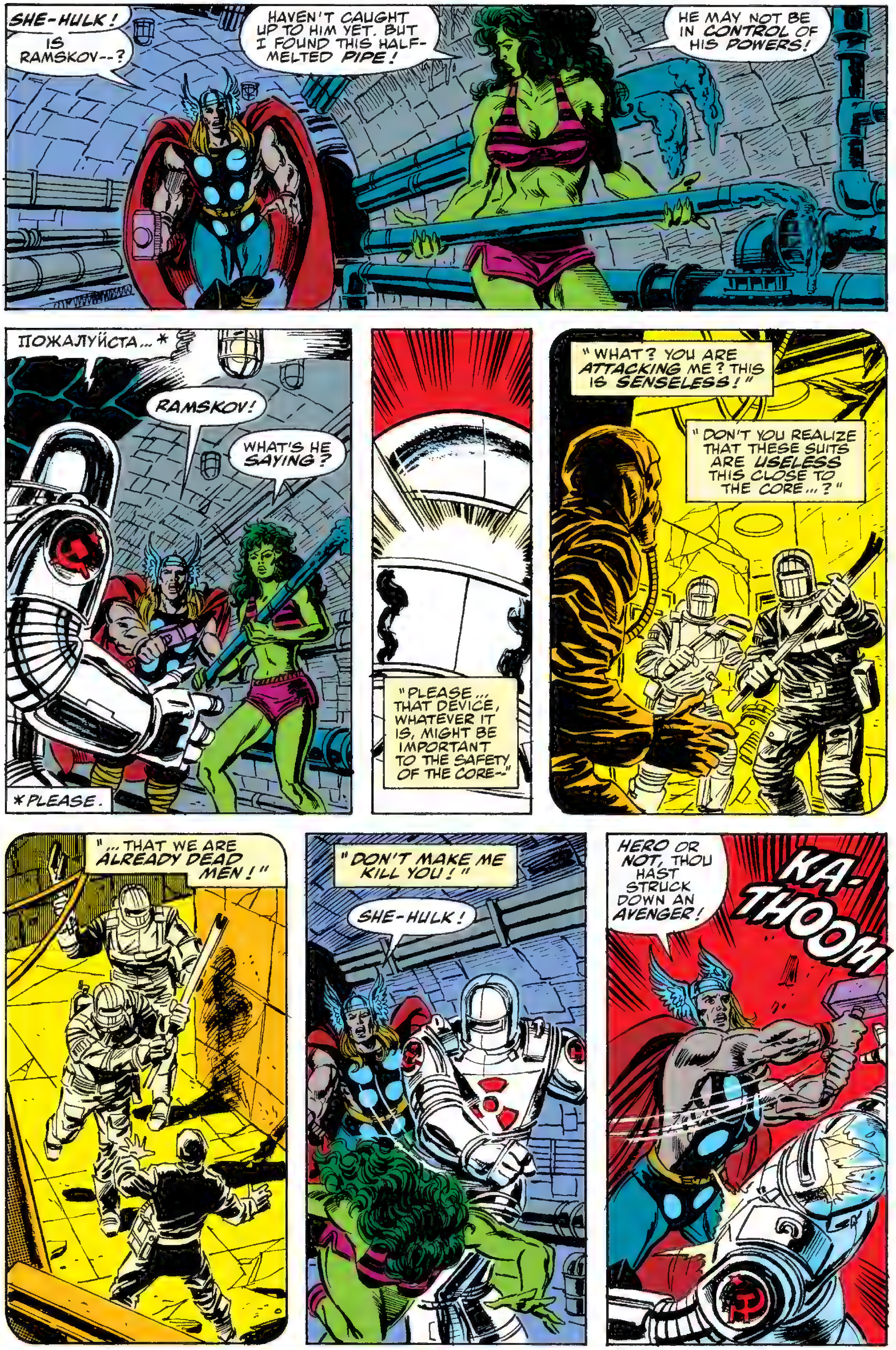

...AND HE SANK RIGHT THROUGH THE FLOOR!
'TIS AS DEEP AS A MINE SHAFT!
THAT'S ALL YOU KNOW, SIKORSKI?
IT'S A *DIPLOMATIC* SITUATION, CAP--
NO APPARENT INCREASE IN BACKGROUND RADIATION LEVEL...
RAMSKOV HATH THE POWER TO ***TRANSMUTE MATTER?*** TO ***VAPORIZE*** SOLID ROCK AND STEEL TO AN UNKNOWN DEPTH? HATH THIS FOE A HUMAN LIMITATION?
CLEAN EDGES. NO HEAT DURING THE MATTER TO ENERGY TRANSFERENCE! THIS IS BEYOND ***MOLECULAR*** MANIPULATION! THIS GUY CAN MESS WITH ***QUARKS!***
YOU HAVE TO DO BETTER THAN THAT, SIKORSKI! WHAT POWERS DOES THIS RAMSKOV HAVE? WHAT ARE WE UP AGAINST?
ALL I *KNOW* IS WHAT I *SAW*, AND THAT WAS MIGHTY *IMPRESSIVE!*
WHATEVER YOU DO--
--PLEASE BEAR IN MIND THAT LT. RAMSKOV IS A ***HERO OF THE SOVIET UNION*** AND IT WILL NOT DO FOR AMERICAN SUPER HEROES TO KILL HIM ON AMERICAN SOIL!
AVENGERS ARE PLEDGED TO ***PROTECT*** HUMAN LIFE, MS. ZHUKOVA...

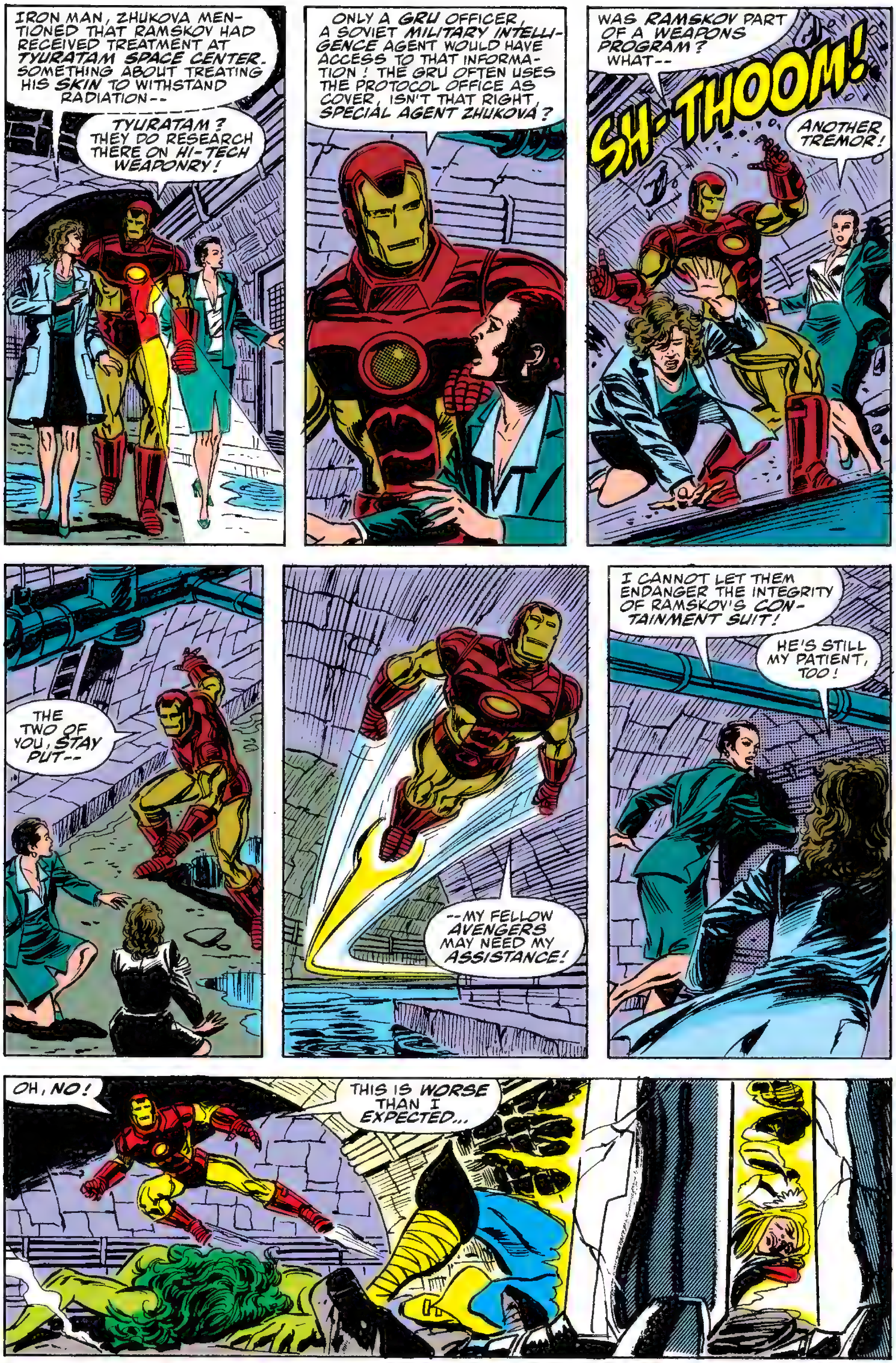

LEVEL WITH US, DR. ESTIVEZ. WE HAVE TO GO DOWN THERE AND FACE THIS GUY...
I WAS NEVER ABLE TO MAKE A COMPLETE EXAMINATION BECAUSE OF THE CONTAINMENT SUIT, BUT I DO KNOW THAT HE WAS DELIBERATELY KEPT IN A CHEMICALLY INDUCED CATATONIC STATE...
...WHICH LEADS ME TO BELIEVE THAT THE SOVIETS WERE WELL AWARE OF LT. RAMSKOV'S POWERS AND WERE KEEPING HIM DRUGGED SO THAT WE WOULDN'T LEARN ABOUT THEM WHILE HE WAS UNDER TREATMENT HERE--
YOU ARE MAKING WILD ACCUSATIONS TO COVER UP FOR YOUR OWN NEGLIGENCE IN DISCONNECTING VITAL--
SEISMIC TREMOR!
SH-THOOOM!
A BIG ONE! EPICENTER'S DIRECTLY BELOW US!
THE FLOOR IS COLLAPSING!
DR. ESTIVEZ, ZHUKOVA AND THE SHE-HULK FELL INTO THE PIT! THOR AND IRON MAN--
SHEESH! WHAT NEXT?

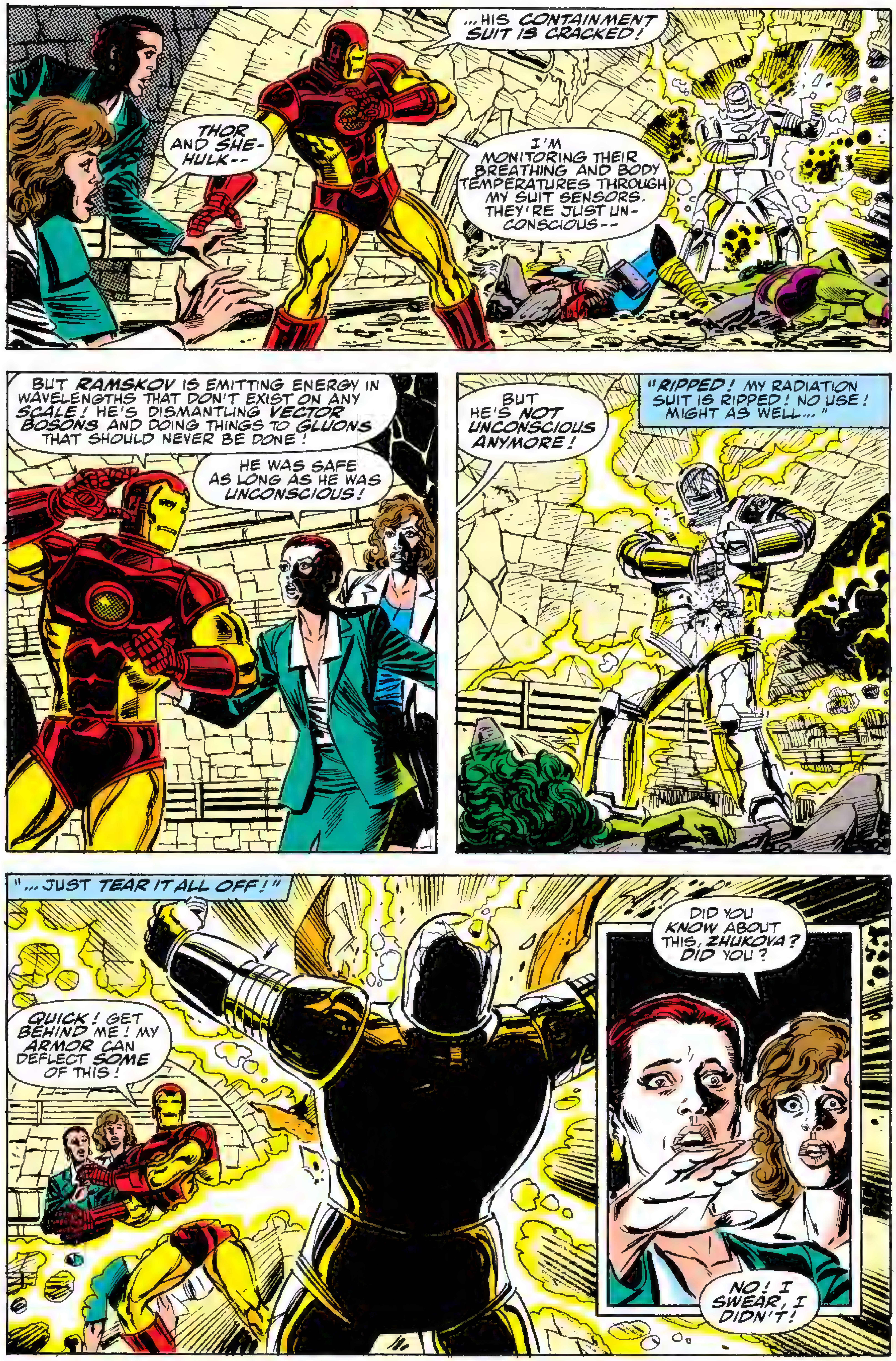

--WE'RE ALREADY ON THE CASE, CAP!
WE'VE GOT TO CLEAR EVERYBODY BACK FROM THE EDGE BEFORE IT CRUMBLES ANY FURTHER, SERSI!
RAMSKOV MUST HAVE CAUSED THAT TREMOR...
...BUT DID HE MEAN TO CAUSE IT? IS HE RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS ACTIONS?
CATCH THE OTHER TWO FIRST--
--I COULD FALL TWICE THIS DISTANCE AND NOT MUSS MY HAIR!
DR. ESTIVEZ AND ZHUKOVA ARE SAFE, JENNIFER! I CAN STILL SWOOP DOWN AND--
I'M FINE, IRON MAN! JUST TAKING THE EXPRESS ELEVATOR DOWN--
--TO THE LAST SUB-BASEMENT!
THOOMP!

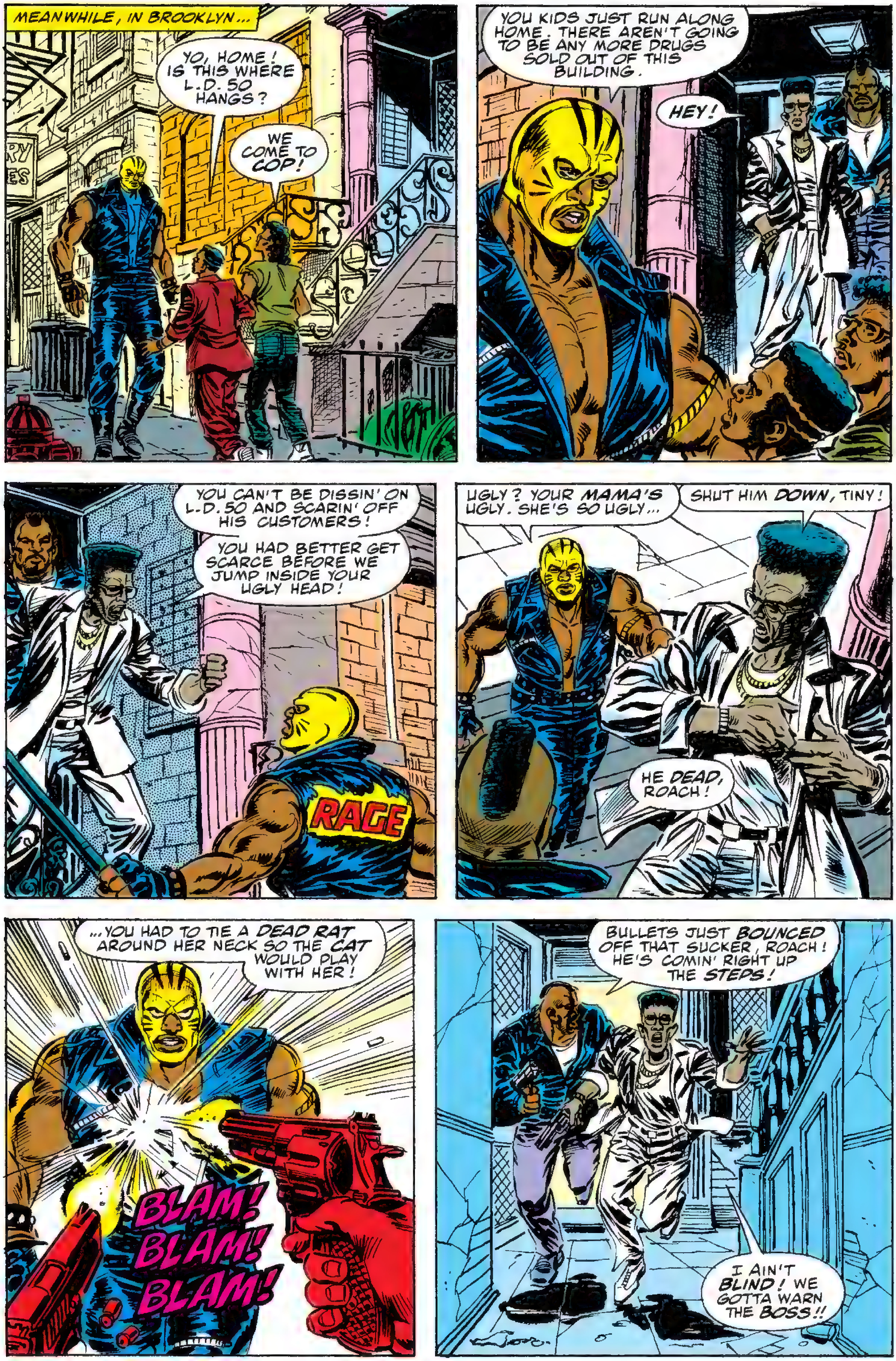

THIS SEEMS TO BE AN OLD CONDUIT TUNNEL, HUNDREDS OF FEET BELOW THE CITY! A JUNCTION OF STORM DRAINS, SEWERS AND ELECTRICAL LINES!
THOSE TRACKS! RAMSKOV MUST HAVE WANDERED OFF DOWN INTO THE TUNNELS...
...IF HE'S CONFUSED AND DISORIENTED FROM THE DRUGS, THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT'S GOING THROUGH HIS HEAD!
LT. RAMSKOV! CAN YOU HEAR ME? TOVARICH!
FEAR NOT, LADIES! A SWIFT ASCENT TO SAFETY AND--
NO! TAKE ME DOWN! I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR RAMSKOV!
RAMSKOV IS GOING TO NEED ME, ALSO! HE IS UNDER MY CARE, AND THIS IS A MEDICAL PROBLEM!
VERY WELL...
LO! SEE THE RENT OUR PLUMMETING SHE-HULK MADE!
SHE MUST HAVE FOLLOWED THOSE TRACKS!
HURRY ON AHEAD, THOR! I'LL FOLLOW UP WITH THE LADIES.
BY MY FATHER'S SINGLE EYE, JENNIFER SHALT NOT FACE THIS MENACE ALONE!

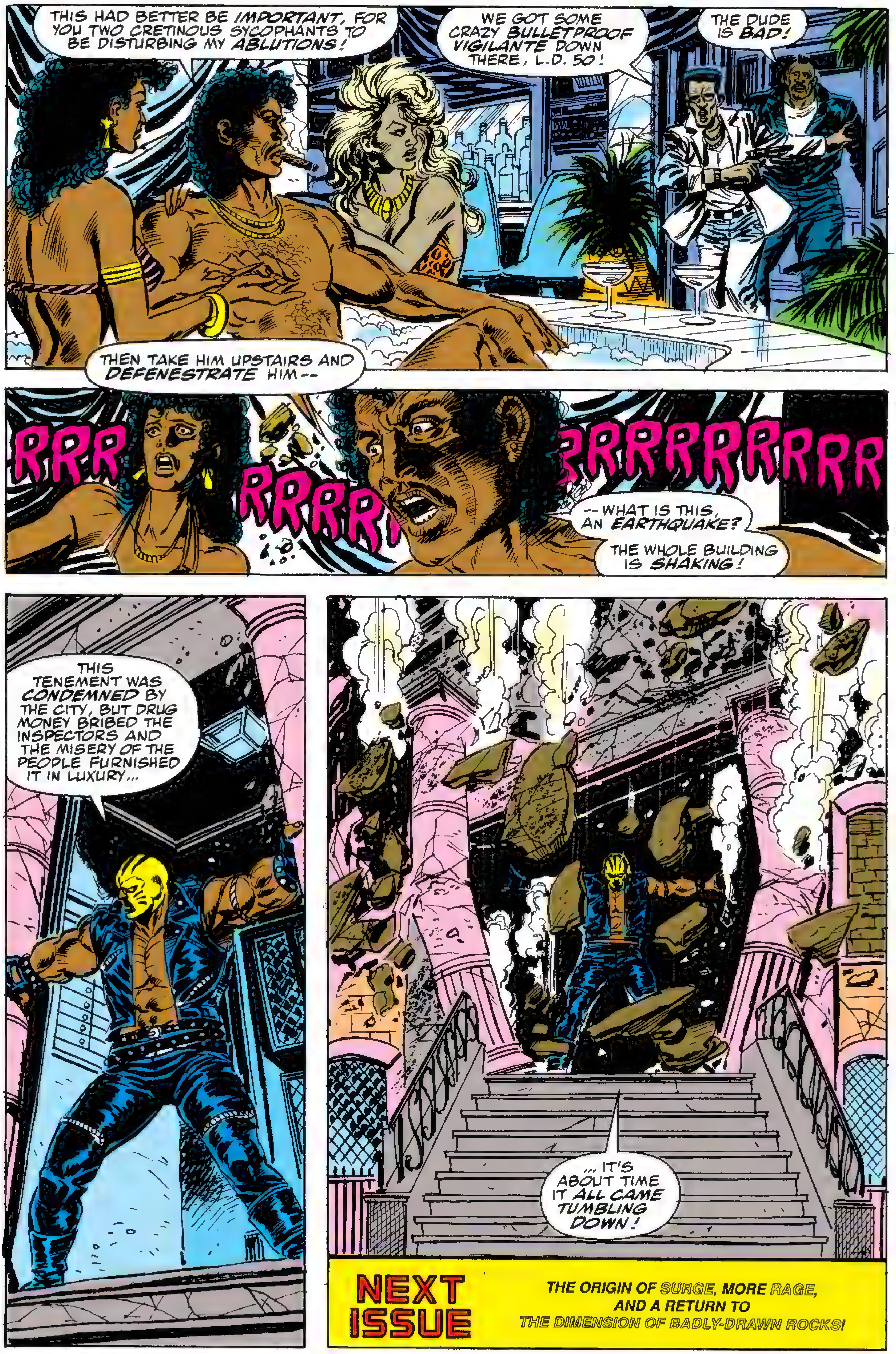

NEARBY...
"...VALVE... STUCK--"
"...CAN'T GET ENOUGH LEVERAGE--"
"--RADIOACTIVE STEAM STILL VENTING INTO ATMOSPHERE..."
CLANG!
"HOW CAN THIS BE? MEN IN LEAD SUITS? THEY SEEM TO BE DISMANTLING A DEVICE ATTACHED TO THE REACTOR!"
"WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? GET AWAY FROM THE CORE!"
"STOP! ANY TAMPERING WITH THE DAMPER ELEMENTS COULD RESULT IN A TOTAL MELTDOWN!"
"BRING THAT THING BACK! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING! MILLIONS OF LIVES ARE AT STAKE! PLEASE!"


SHE-HULK! IS RAMSKOV--?
HAVEN'T CAUGHT UP TO HIM YET. BUT I FOUND THIS HALF-MELTED PIPE!
HE MAY NOT BE IN CONTROL OF HIS POWERS!
ПОЖАЛУЙСТА...*
RAMSKOV!
WHAT'S HE SAYING?
*PLEASE.
"PLEASE... THAT DEVICE, WHATEVER IT IS, MIGHT BE IMPORTANT TO THE SAFETY OF THE CORE--"
"WHAT? YOU ARE ATTACKING ME? THIS IS SENSELESS!"
"DON'T YOU REALIZE THAT THESE SUITS ARE USELESS THIS CLOSE TO THE CORE...?"
"...THAT WE ARE ALREADY DEAD MEN!"
"DON'T MAKE ME KILL YOU!"
SHE-HULK!
HERO OR NOT, THOU HAST STRUCK DOWN AN AVENGER!
KA-THOOM


IRON MAN, ZHUKOVA MENTIONED THAT RAMSKOV HAD RECEIVED TREATMENT AT TYURATAM SPACE CENTER. SOMETHING ABOUT TREATING HIS SKIN TO WITHSTAND RADIATION--
TYURATAM? THEY DO RESEARCH THERE ON HI-TECH WEAPONRY!
ONLY A GRU OFFICER, A SOVIET MILITARY INTELLIGENCE AGENT WOULD HAVE ACCESS TO THAT INFORMATION! THE GRU OFTEN USES THE PROTOCOL OFFICE AS COVER, ISN'T THAT RIGHT, SPECIAL AGENT ZHUKOVA?
WAS RAMSKOV PART OF A WEAPONS PROGRAM? WHAT--
SH-THOOM!
ANOTHER TREMOR!
THE TWO OF YOU, STAY PUT--
--MY FELLOW AVENGERS MAY NEED MY ASSISTANCE!
I CANNOT LET THEM ENDANGER THE INTEGRITY OF RAMSKOV'S CONTAINMENT SUIT!
HE'S STILL MY PATIENT, TOO!
OH, NO!
THIS IS WORSE THAN I EXPECTED...


THOR AND SHE-HULK--
...HIS CONTAINMENT SUIT IS CRACKED!
I'M MONITORING THEIR BREATHING AND BODY TEMPERATURES THROUGH MY SUIT SENSORS. THEY'RE JUST UNCONSCIOUS--
BUT RAMSKOV IS EMITTING ENERGY IN WAVELENGTHS THAT DON'T EXIST ON ANY SCALE! HE'S DISMANTLING VECTOR BOSONS AND DOING THINGS TO GLUONS THAT SHOULD NEVER BE DONE!
HE WAS SAFE AS LONG AS HE WAS UNCONSCIOUS!
BUT HE'S NOT UNCONSCIOUS ANYMORE!
"RIPPED! MY RADIATION SUIT IS RIPPED! NO USE! MIGHT AS WELL..."
"...JUST TEAR IT ALL OFF!"
QUICK! GET BEHIND ME! MY ARMOR CAN DEFLECT SOME OF THIS!
DID YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS, ZHUKOVA? DID YOU?
NO! I SWEAR, I DIDN'T!


MEANWHILE, IN BROOKLYN...
YO, HOME! IS THIS WHERE L.D. 50 HANGS?
WE COME TO COP!
YOU KIDS JUST RUN ALONG HOME. THERE AREN'T GOING TO BE ANY MORE DRUGS SOLD OUT OF THIS BUILDING.
HEY!
YOU CAN'T BE DISSIN' ON L.D. 50 AND SCARIN' OFF HIS CUSTOMERS!
YOU HAD BETTER GET SCARCE BEFORE WE JUMP INSIDE YOUR UGLY HEAD!
RAGE
UGLY? YOUR MAMA'S UGLY. SHE'S SO UGLY...
SHUT HIM DOWN, TINY!
HE DEAD, ROACH!
...YOU HAD TO TIE A DEAD RAT AROUND HER NECK SO THE CAT WOULD PLAY WITH HER!
BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!
BULLETS JUST BOUNCED OFF THAT SUCKER, ROACH! HE'S COMIN' RIGHT UP THE STEPS!
I AIN'T BLIND! WE GOTTA WARN THE BOSS!!


THIS HAD BETTER BE *IMPORTANT*, FOR YOU TWO CRETINOUS SYCOPHANTS TO BE DISTURBING MY *ABLUTIONS*!
WE GOT SOME CRAZY *BULLETPROOF VIGILANTE* DOWN THERE, L.D. 50!
THE DUDE IS *BAD!*
THEN TAKE HIM UPSTAIRS AND *DEFENESTRATE* HIM--
RRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR
--WHAT IS THIS, AN *EARTHQUAKE?*
THE WHOLE BUILDING IS *SHAKING!*
THIS TENEMENT WAS *CONDEMNED* BY THE CITY, BUT DRUG MONEY BRIBED THE INSPECTORS AND THE MISERY OF THE PEOPLE FURNISHED IT IN LUXURY...
...IT'S ABOUT TIME IT *ALL CAME TUMBLING DOWN!*
NEXT ISSUE
THE ORIGIN OF SURGE, MORE RAGE, AND A RETURN TO THE DIMENSION OF BADLY-DRAWN ROCKS!

MARVEL COMICS
CAPTAIN AMERICA THOR VISION SHE-HULK
AVENGERS
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327
DEC
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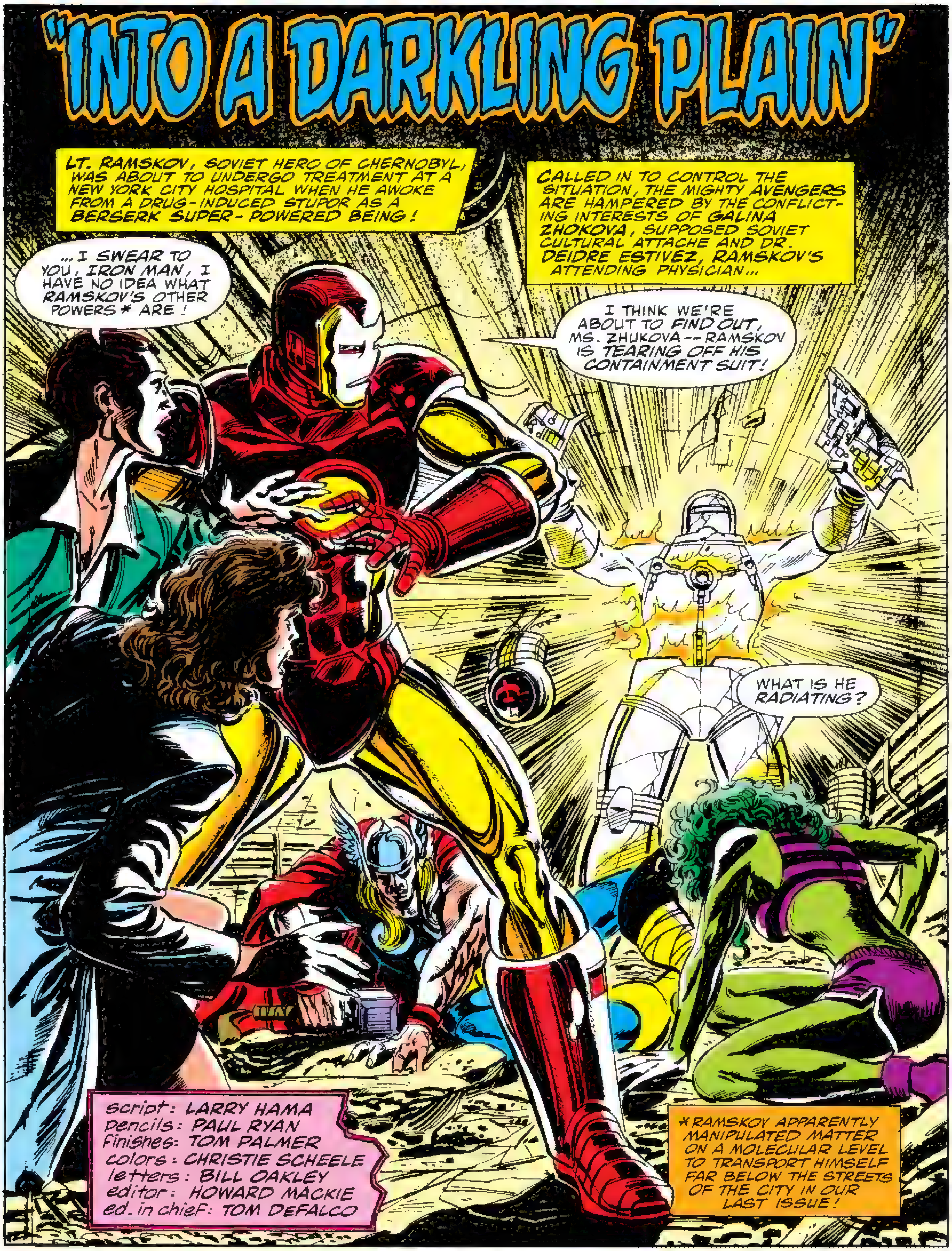
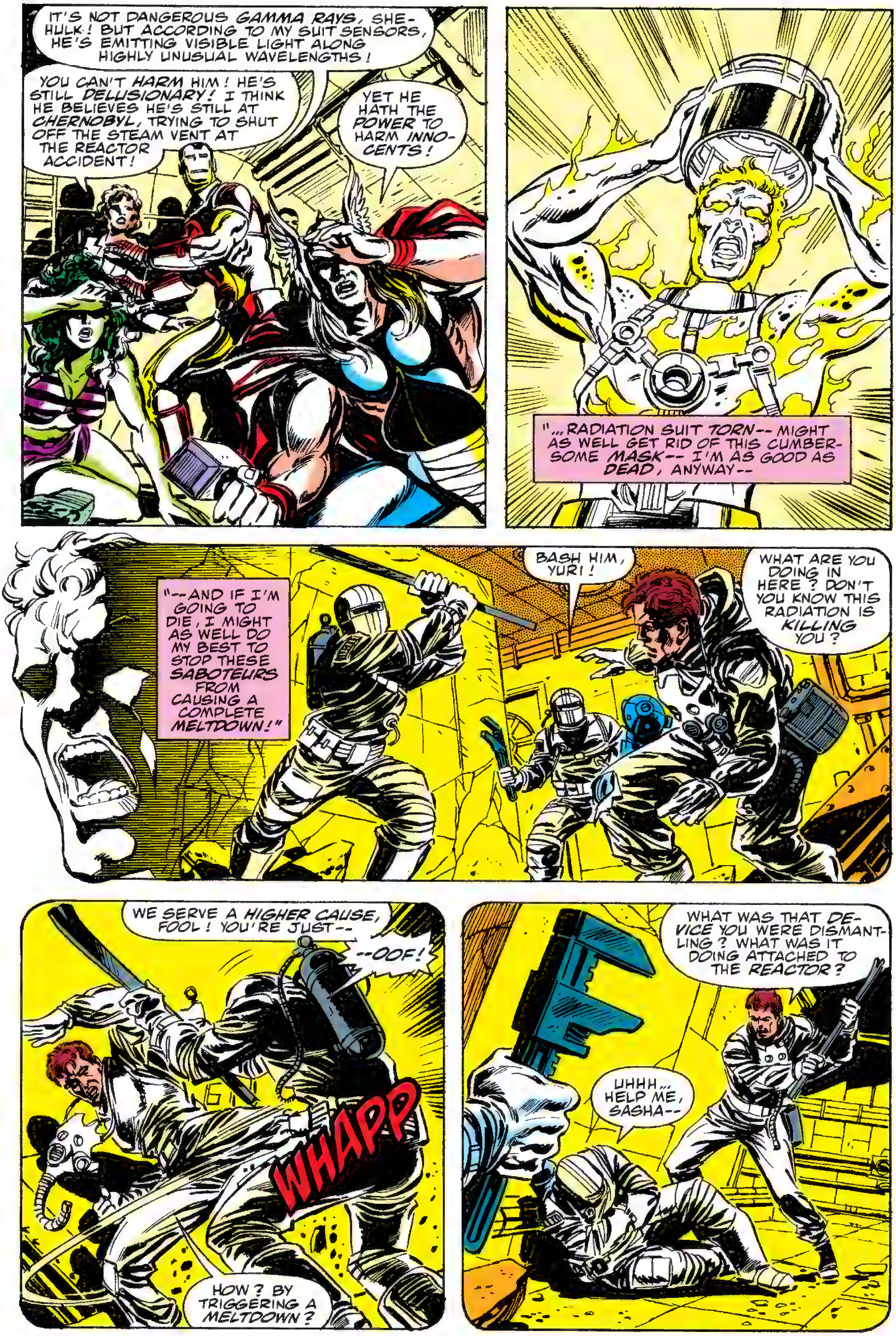
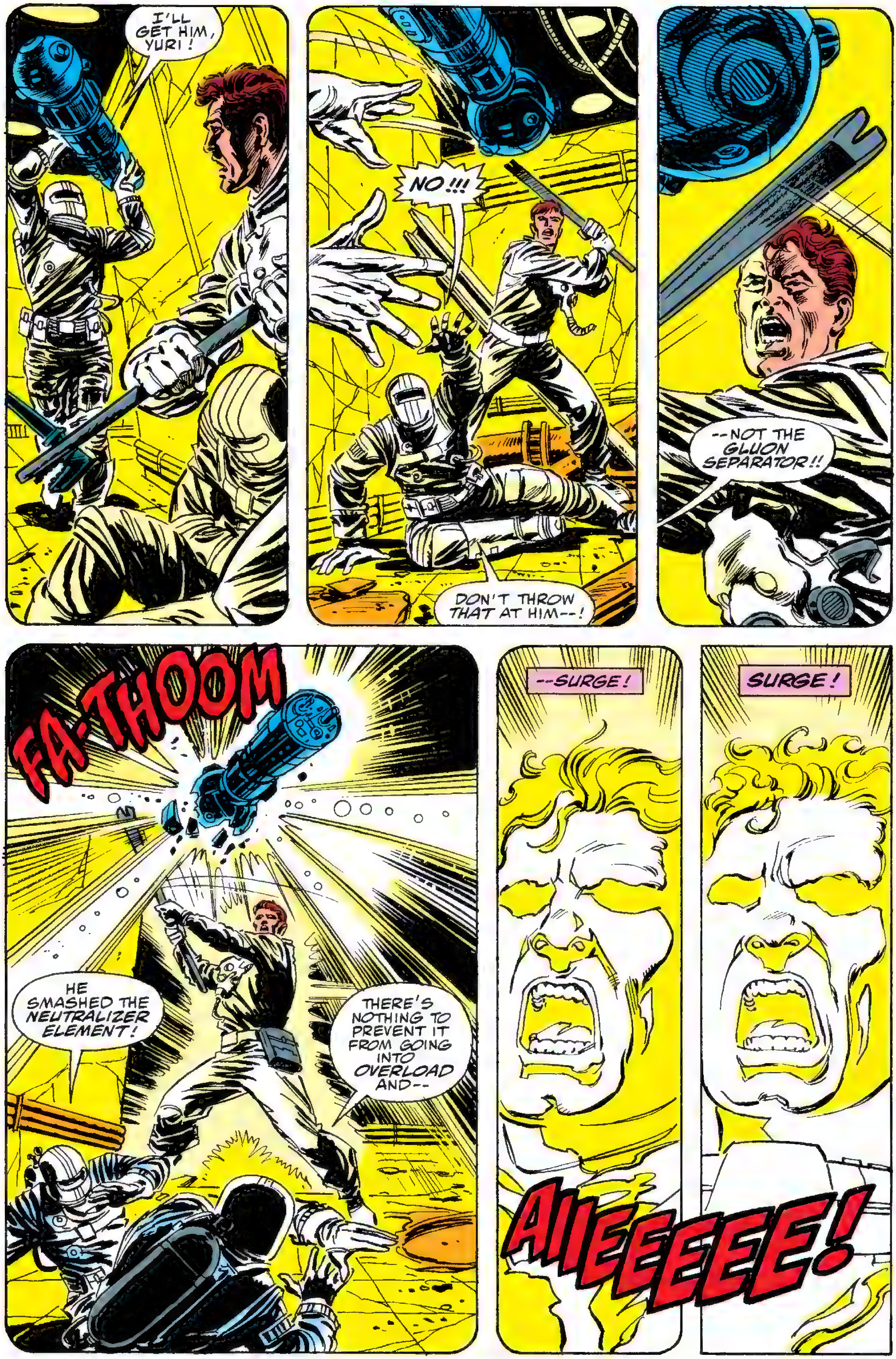
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
GUEST-STARRING
IRON MAN
RYAN/PALMER

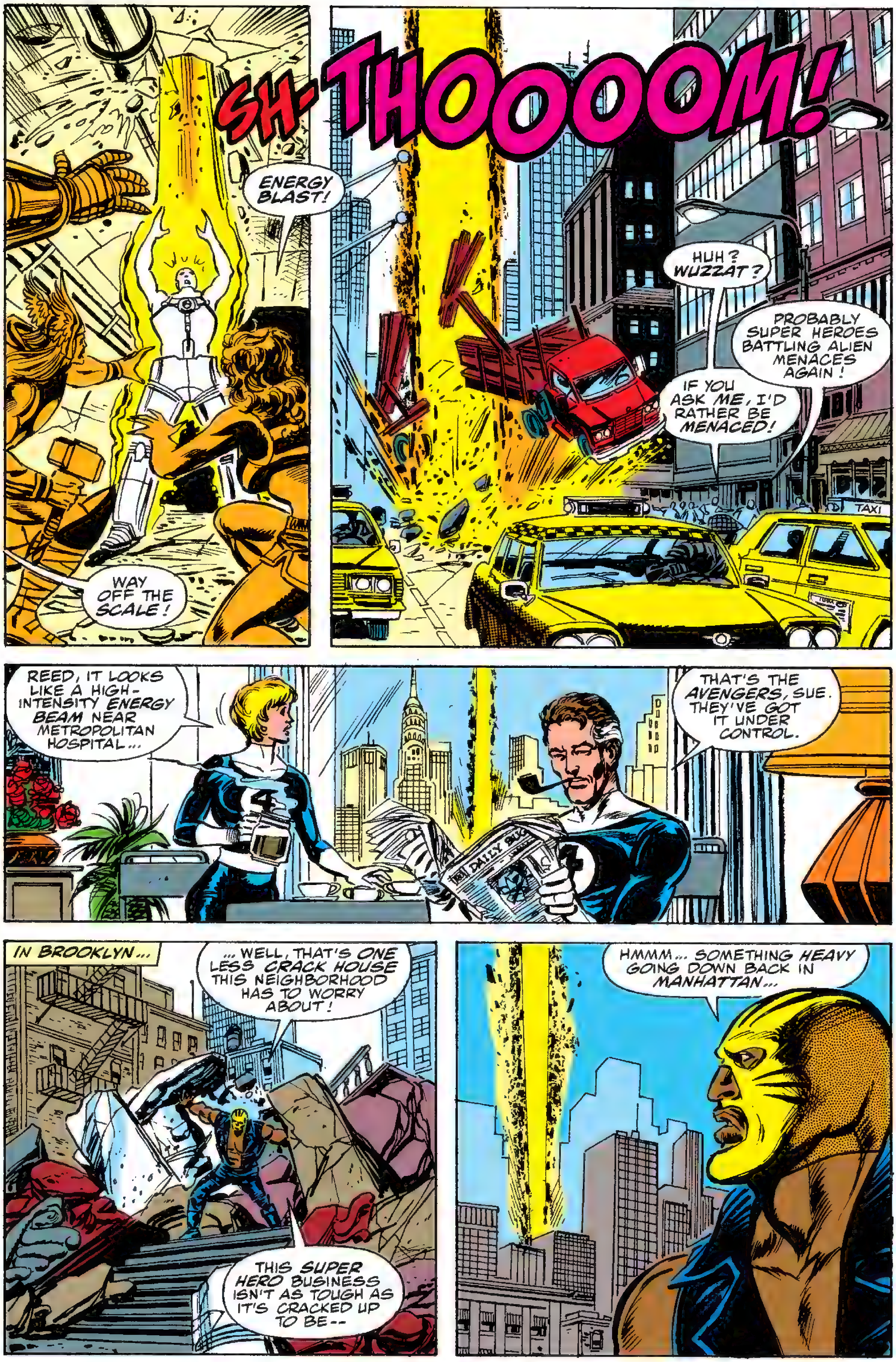
TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND!

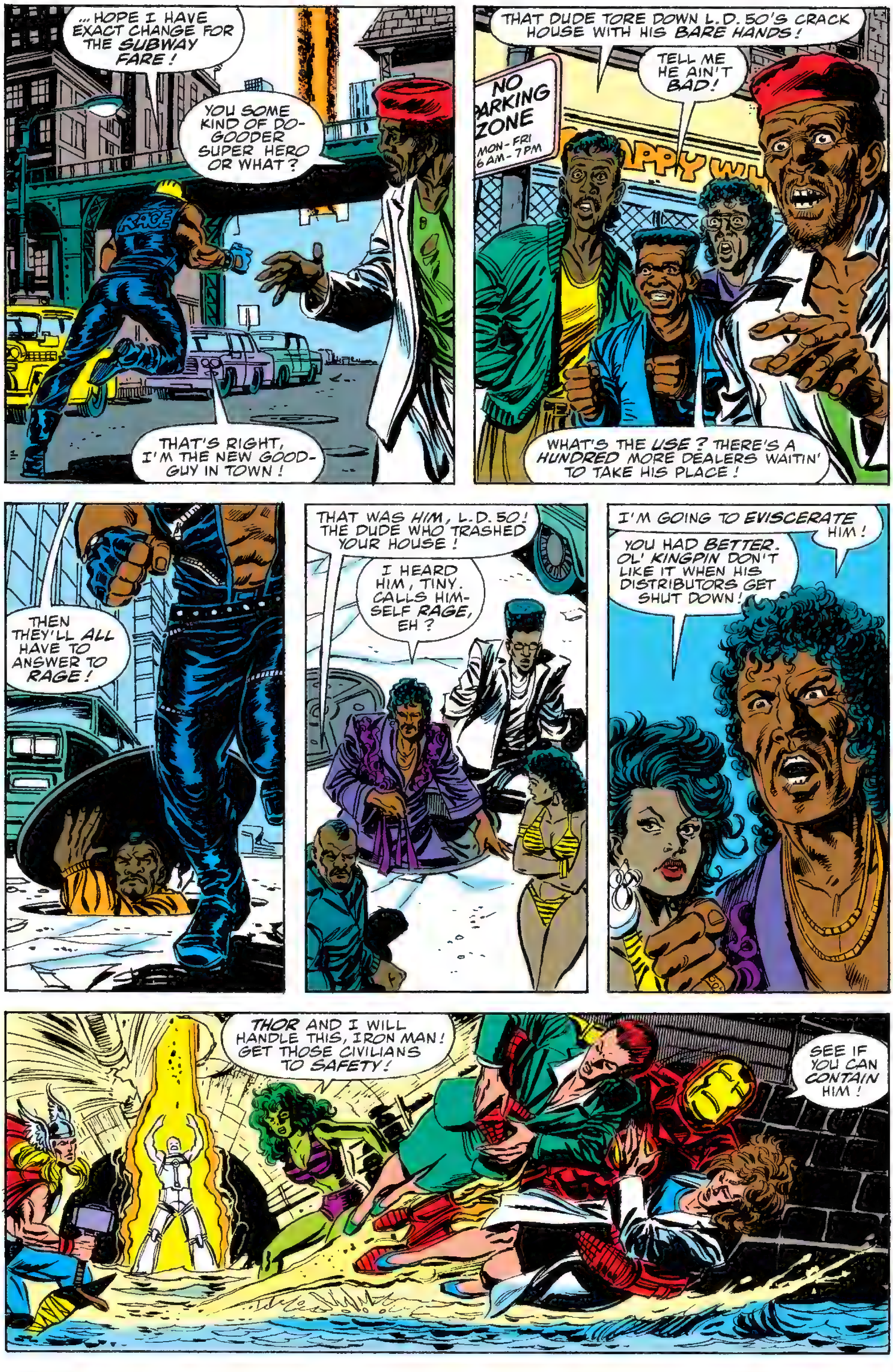
STAN LEE PRESENTS . . . THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

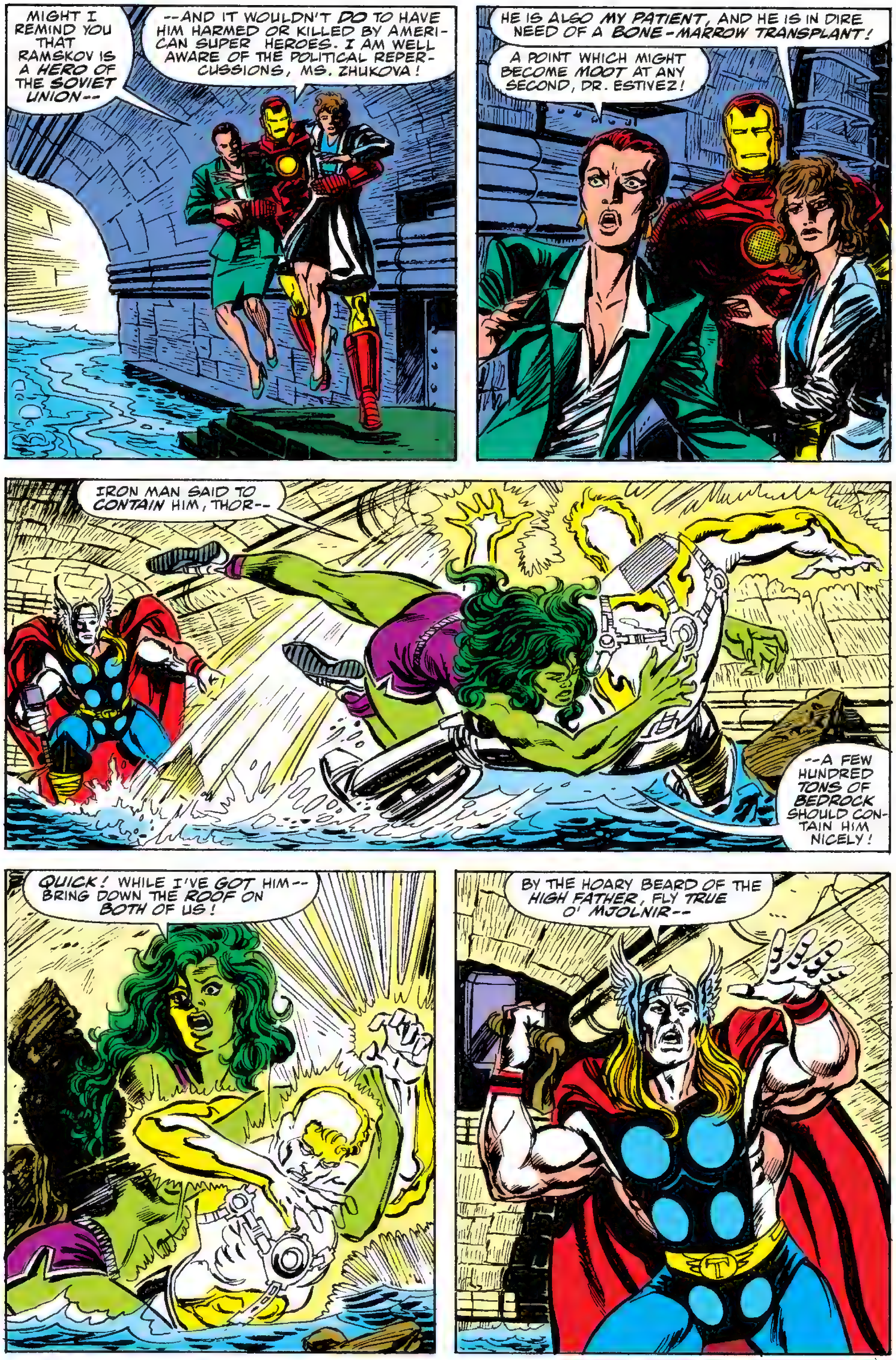

"INTO A DARKLING PLAIN"
LT. RAMSKOV, SOVIET HERO OF CHERNOBYL, WAS ABOUT TO UNDERGO TREATMENT AT A NEW YORK CITY HOSPITAL WHEN HE AWOKE FROM A DRUG-INDUCED STUPOR AS A BERSERK SUPER-POWERED BEING!
CALLED IN TO CONTROL THE SITUATION, THE MIGHTY AVENGERS ARE HAMPERED BY THE CONFLICTING INTERESTS OF GALINA ZHOKOVA, SUPPOSED SOVIET CULTURAL ATTACHE AND DR. DEIDRE ESTIVEZ, RAMSKOV'S ATTENDING PHYSICIAN...
...I SWEAR TO YOU, IRON MAN, I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT RAMSKOV'S OTHER POWERS* ARE!
I THINK WE'RE ABOUT TO FIND OUT, MS. ZHUKOVA--RAMSKOV IS TEARING OFF HIS CONTAINMENT SUIT!
WHAT IS HE RADIATING?
script: LARRY HAMA
pencils: PAUL RYAN
finishes: TOM PALMER
colors: CHRISTIE SCHEELE
letters: BILL OAKLEY
editor: HOWARD MACKIE
ed. in chief: TOM DEFALCO
*RAMSKOV APPARENTLY MANIPULATED MATTER ON A MOLECULAR LEVEL TO TRANSPORT HIMSELF FAR BELOW THE STREETS OF THE CITY IN OUR LAST ISSUE!

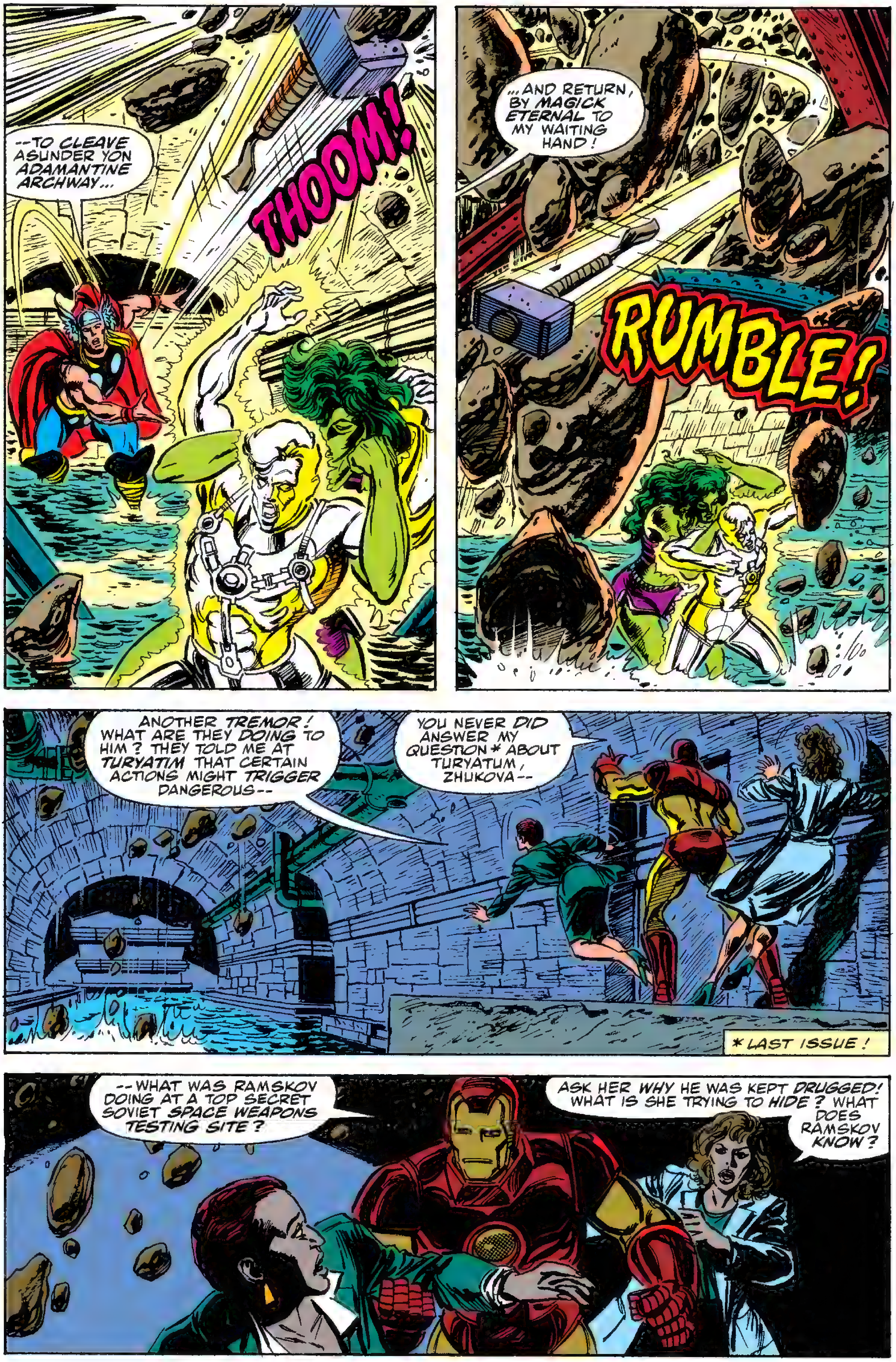

IT'S NOT DANGEROUS GAMMA RAYS, SHE-HULK! BUT ACCORDING TO MY SUIT SENSORS, HE'S EMITTING VISIBLE LIGHT ALONG HIGHLY UNUSUAL WAVELENGTHS!
YOU CAN'T HARM HIM! HE'S STILL DELUSIONARY! I THINK HE BELIEVES HE'S STILL AT CHERNOBYL, TRYING TO SHUT OFF THE STEAM VENT AT THE REACTOR ACCIDENT!
YET HE HATH THE POWER TO HARM INNOCENTS!
"...RADIATION SUIT TORN-- MIGHT AS WELL GET RID OF THIS CUMBERSOME MASK-- I'M AS GOOD AS DEAD, ANYWAY--
"--AND IF I'M GOING TO DIE, I MIGHT AS WELL DO MY BEST TO STOP THESE SABOTEURS FROM CAUSING A COMPLETE MELTDOWN!"
BASH HIM, YURI!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN HERE? DON'T YOU KNOW THIS RADIATION IS KILLING YOU?
WE SERVE A HIGHER CAUSE, FOOL! YOU'RE JUST--
--OOF!
WHAPP
HOW? BY TRIGGERING A MELTDOWN?
WHAT WAS THAT DEVICE YOU WERE DISMANTLING? WHAT WAS IT DOING ATTACHED TO THE REACTOR?
UHHH... HELP ME, SASHA--

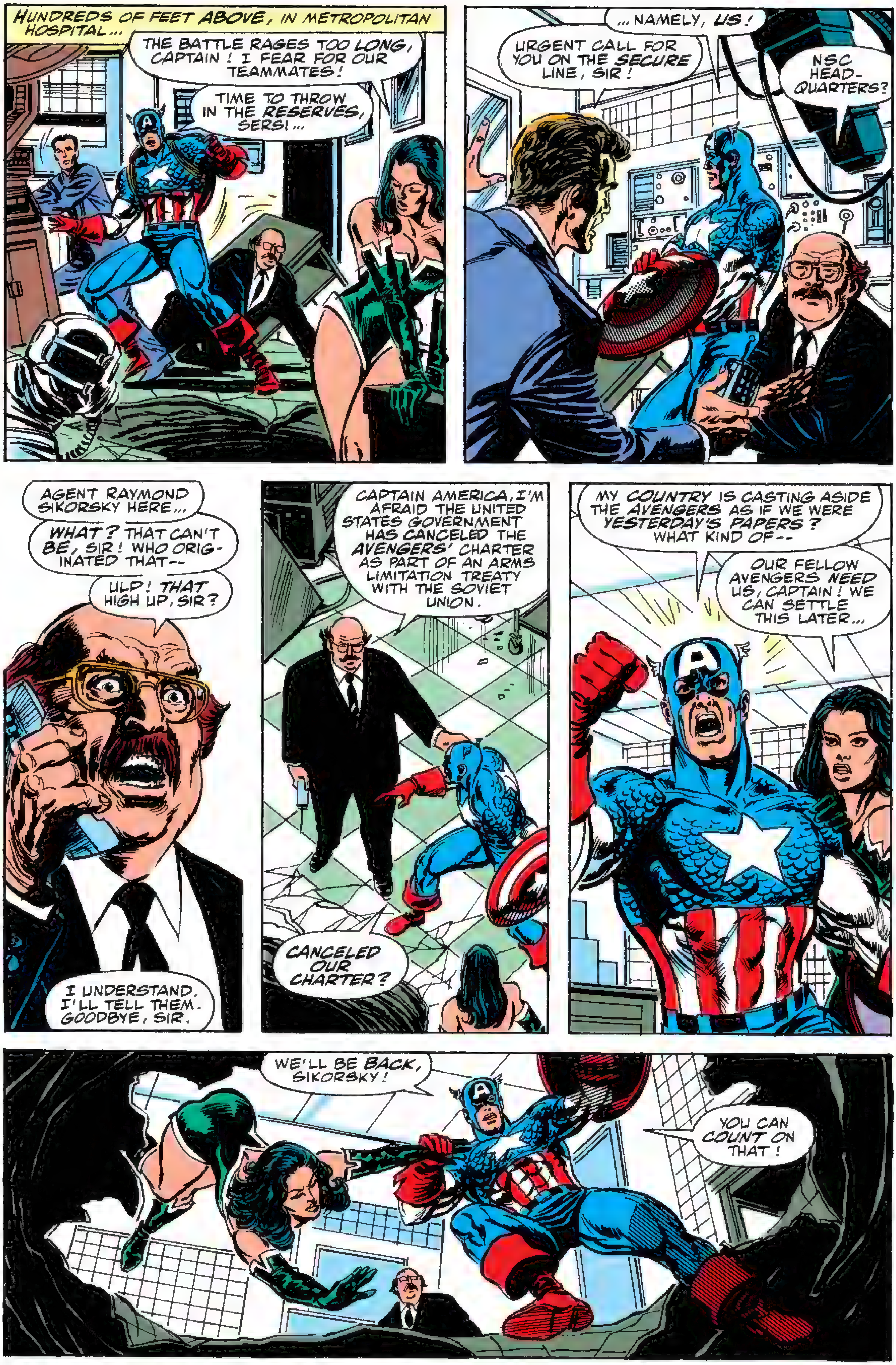

I'LL GET HIM, YURI!
NO!!!
DON'T THROW THAT AT HIM--!
--NOT THE GLUON SEPARATOR!!
FA-THOOM
HE SMASHED THE NEUTRALIZER ELEMENT!
THERE'S NOTHING TO PREVENT IT FROM GOING INTO OVERLOAD AND--
--SURGE!
SURGE!
AIIEEEEEE!

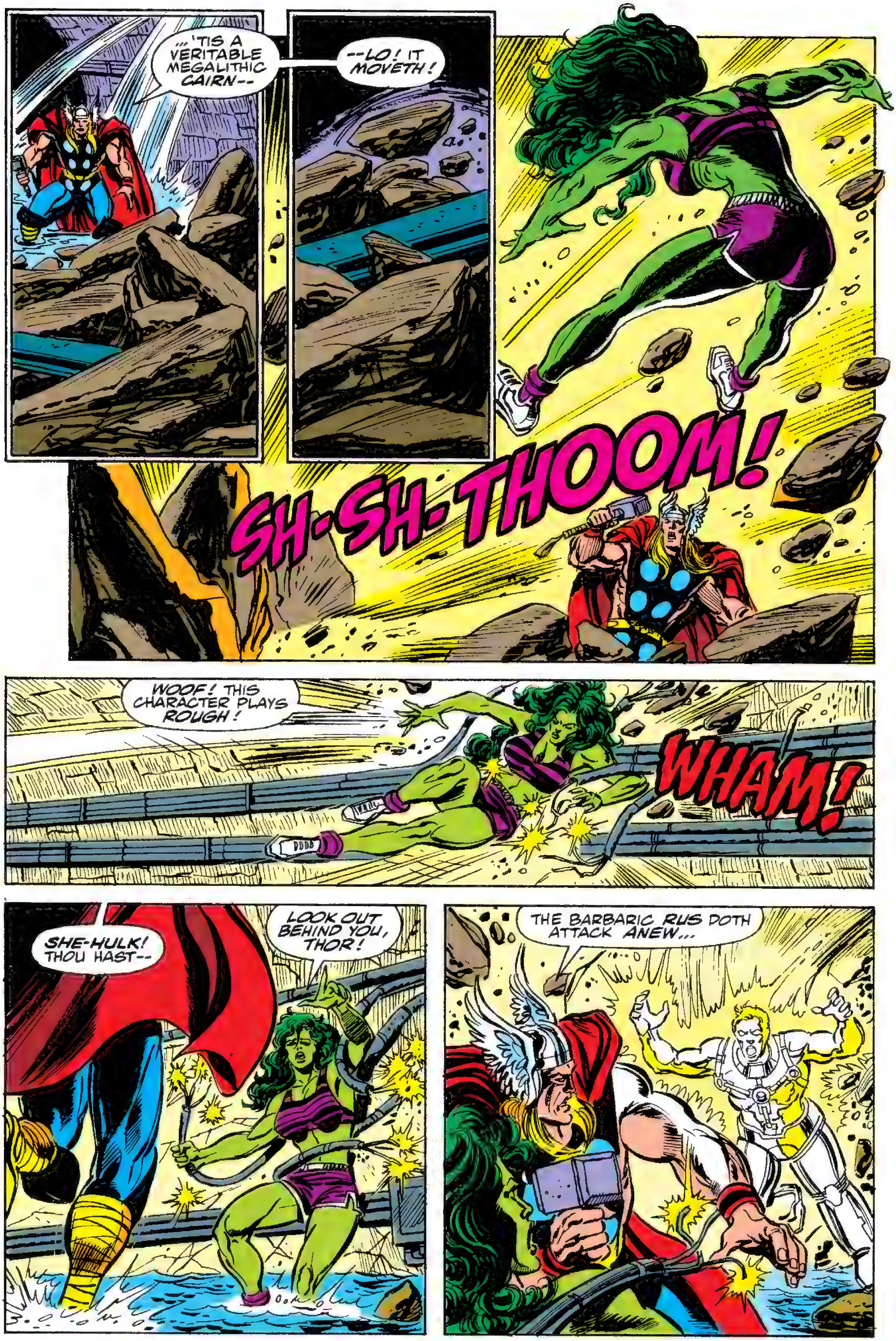

ENERGY BLAST!
WAY OFF THE SCALE!
SH-THOOOOM!
HUH? WUZZAT?
PROBABLY SUPER HEROES BATTLING ALIEN MENACES AGAIN!
IF YOU ASK ME, I'D RATHER BE MENACED!
TAXI
REED, IT LOOKS LIKE A HIGH-INTENSITY ENERGY BEAM NEAR METROPOLITAN HOSPITAL...
THAT'S THE AVENGERS, SUE. THEY'VE GOT IT UNDER CONTROL.
IN BROOKLYN...
...WELL, THAT'S ONE LESS CRACK HOUSE THIS NEIGHBORHOOD HAS TO WORRY ABOUT!
THIS SUPER HERO BUSINESS ISN'T AS TOUGH AS IT'S CRACKED UP TO BE--
HMMM... SOMETHING HEAVY GOING DOWN BACK IN MANHATTAN...

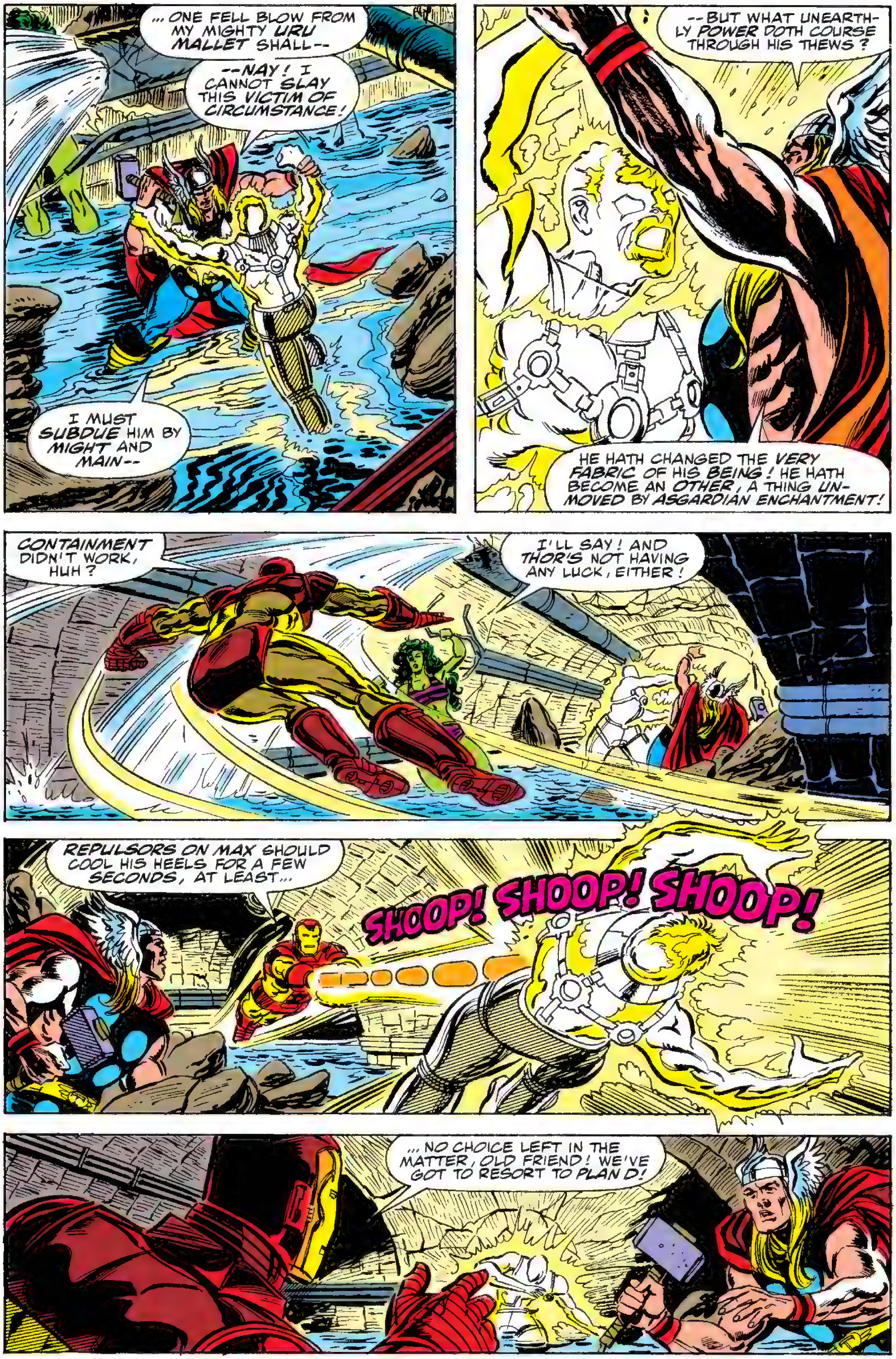

...HOPE I HAVE EXACT CHANGE FOR THE *SUBWAY FARE!*
RAGE
YOU SOME KIND OF DO-GOODER SUPER HERO OR WHAT?
THAT'S RIGHT, I'M THE NEW GOOD-GUY IN TOWN!
THAT DUDE TORE DOWN L.D. 50'S CRACK HOUSE WITH HIS *BARE HANDS!*
NO ARKING ZONE MON-FRI 6AM-7PM
APPY WH
TELL ME HE AIN'T *BAD!*
WHAT'S THE *USE?* THERE'S A *HUNDRED* MORE DEALERS WAITIN' TO TAKE HIS PLACE!
THEN THEY'LL *ALL* HAVE TO ANSWER TO *RAGE!*
THAT WAS *HIM,* L.D. 50! THE DUDE WHO TRASHED YOUR HOUSE!
I HEARD HIM, TINY. CALLS HIMSELF *RAGE,* EH?
I'M GOING TO *EVISCERATE* HIM!
YOU HAD *BETTER.* OL' *KINGPIN* DON'T LIKE IT WHEN HIS DISTRIBUTORS GET SHUT DOWN!
THOR AND I WILL HANDLE THIS, IRON MAN! GET THOSE CIVILIANS TO *SAFETY!*
SEE IF YOU CAN *CONTAIN* HIM!

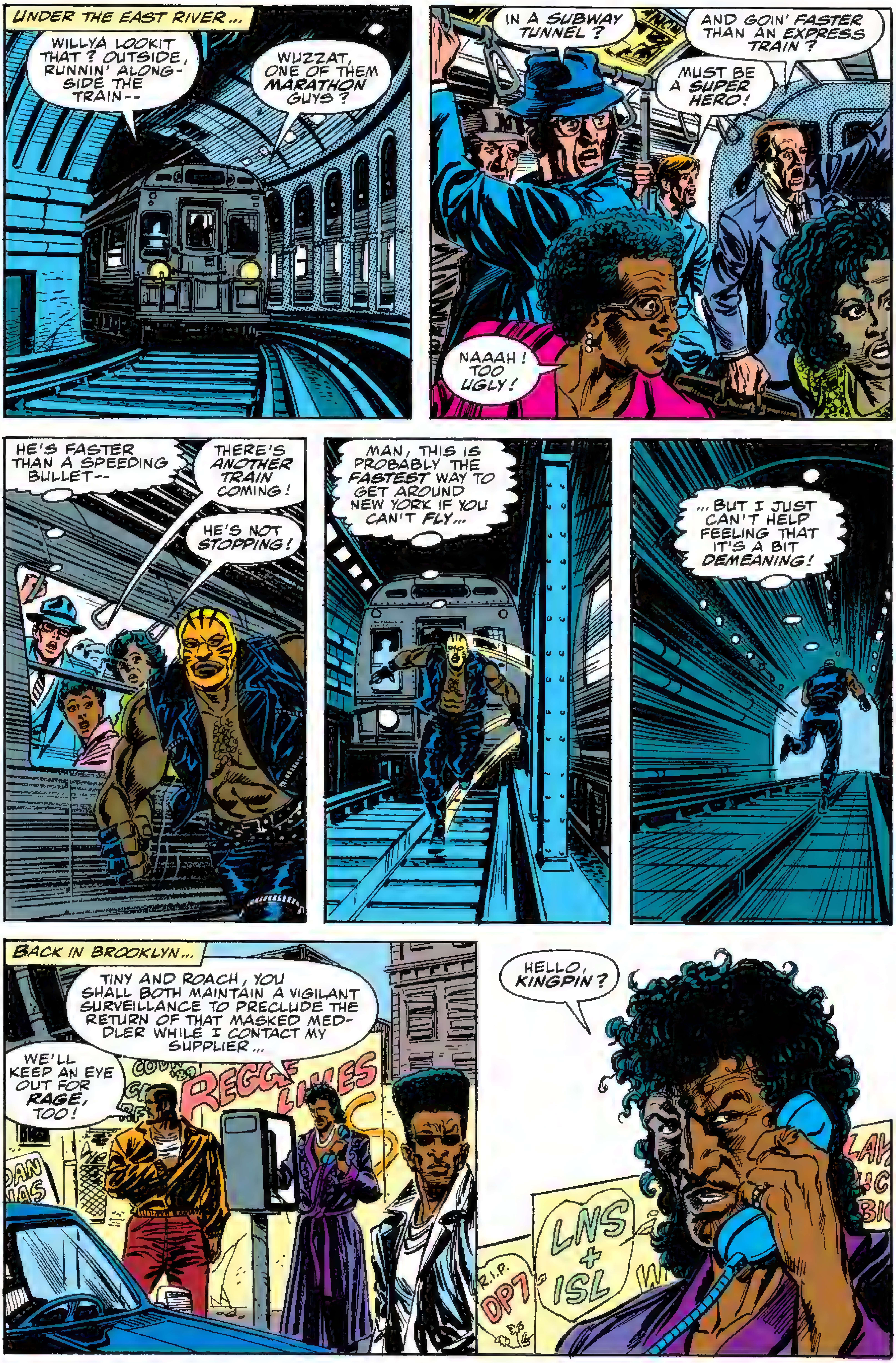

MIGHT I REMIND YOU THAT RAMSKOV IS A HERO OF THE SOVIET UNION--
--AND IT WOULDN'T DO TO HAVE HIM HARMED OR KILLED BY AMERICAN SUPER HEROES. I AM WELL AWARE OF THE POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS, MS. ZHUKOVA!
HE IS ALSO MY PATIENT, AND HE IS IN DIRE NEED OF A BONE-MARROW TRANSPLANT!
A POINT WHICH MIGHT BECOME MOOT AT ANY SECOND, DR. ESTIVEZ!
IRON MAN SAID TO CONTAIN HIM, THOR--
--A FEW HUNDRED TONS OF BEDROCK SHOULD CONTAIN HIM NICELY!
QUICK! WHILE I'VE GOT HIM-- BRING DOWN THE ROOF ON BOTH OF US!
BY THE HOARY BEARD OF THE HIGH FATHER, FLY TRUE O' MJOLNIR--

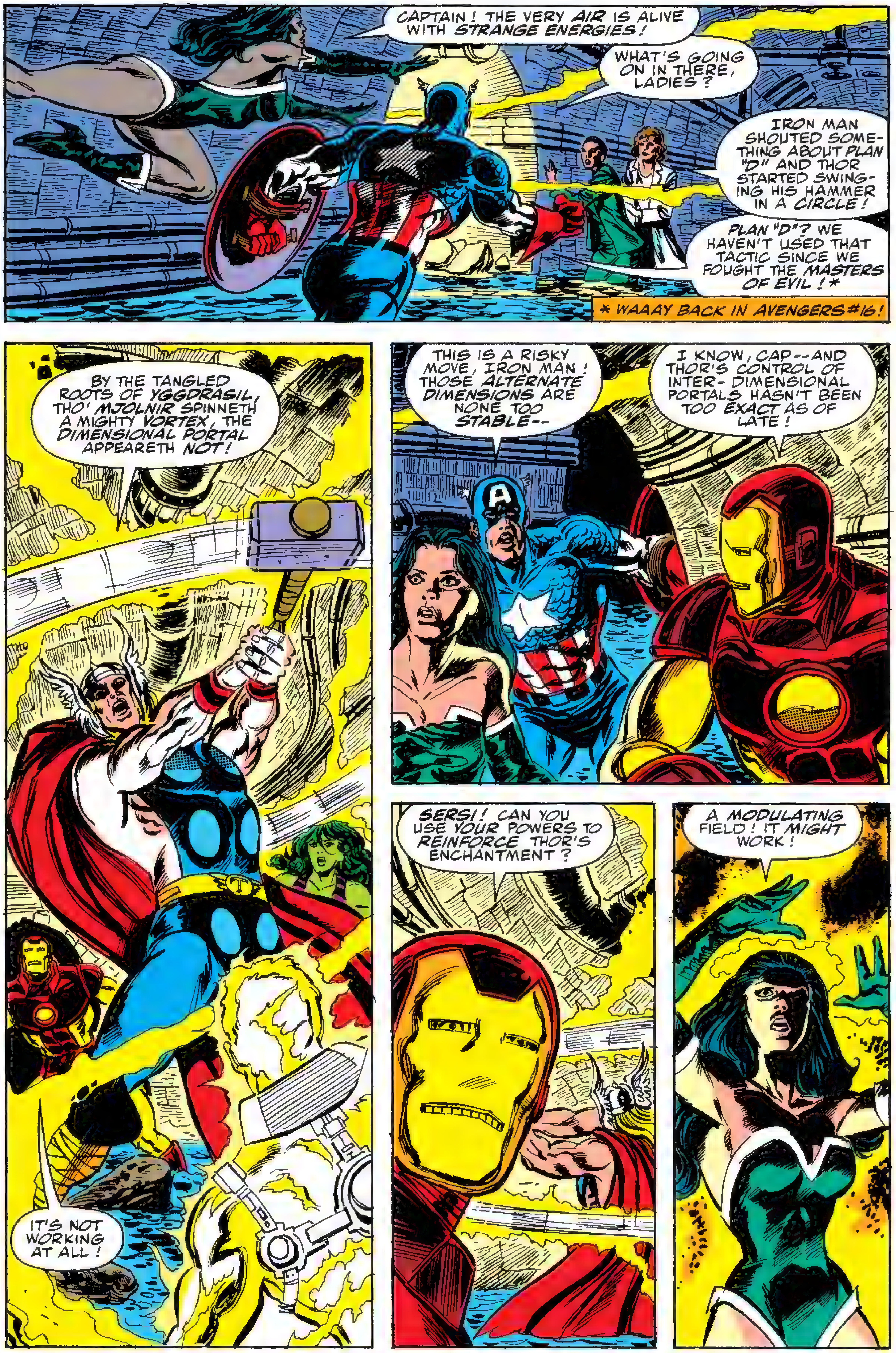

--TO CLEAVE ASUNDER YON ADAMANTINE ARCHWAY...
THOOM!
...AND RETURN, BY MAGICK ETERNAL TO MY WAITING HAND!
RUMBLE!
ANOTHER TREMOR! WHAT ARE THEY DOING TO HIM? THEY TOLD ME AT TURYATIM THAT CERTAIN ACTIONS MIGHT TRIGGER DANGEROUS--
YOU NEVER DID ANSWER MY QUESTION* ABOUT TURYATUM, ZHUKOVA--
*LAST ISSUE!
--WHAT WAS RAMSKOV DOING AT A TOP SECRET SOVIET SPACE WEAPONS TESTING SITE?
ASK HER WHY HE WAS KEPT DRUGGED! WHAT IS SHE TRYING TO HIDE? WHAT DOES RAMSKOV KNOW?

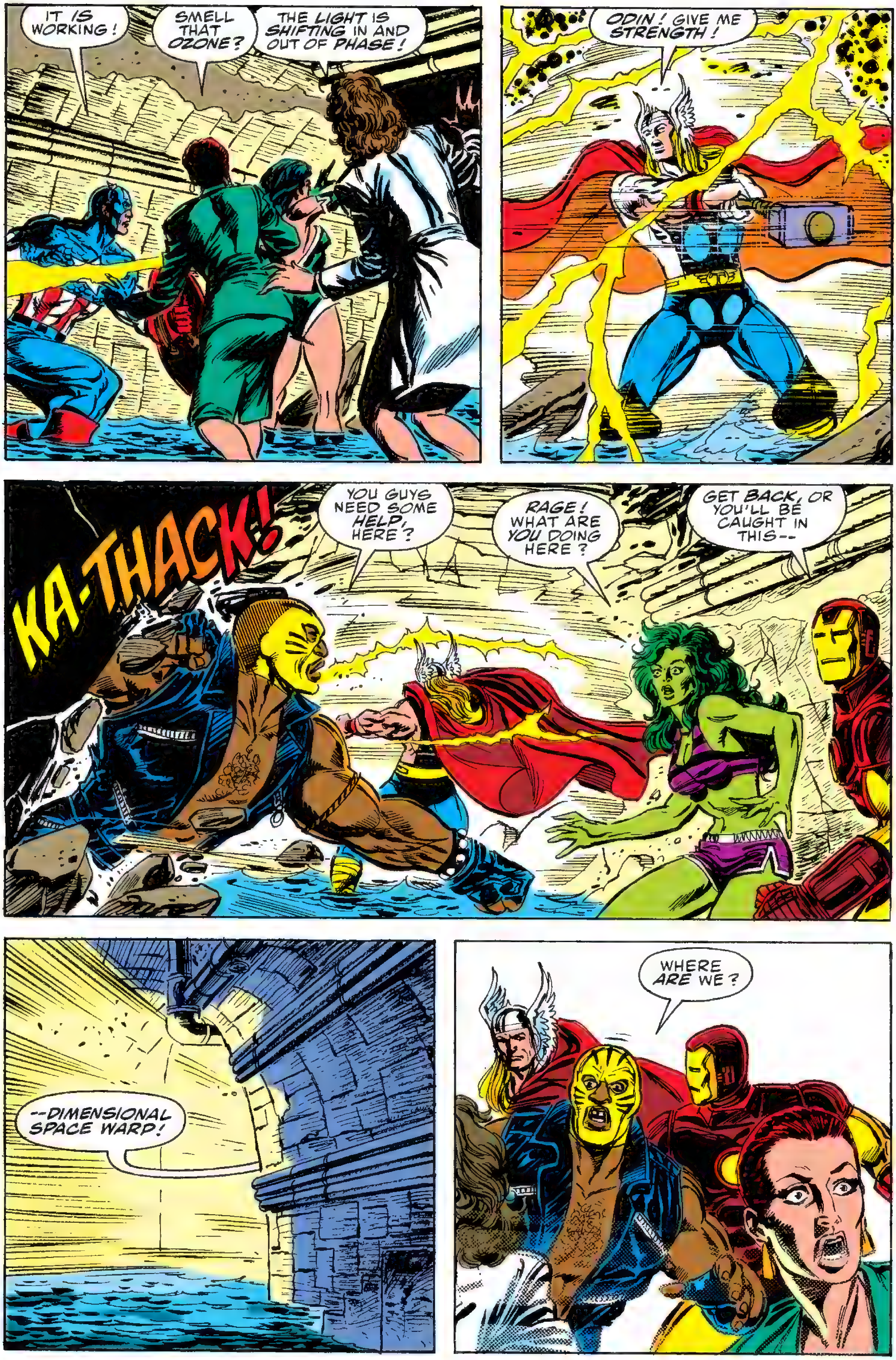

HUNDREDS OF FEET ABOVE, IN METROPOLITAN HOSPITAL...
THE BATTLE RAGES TOO LONG, CAPTAIN! I FEAR FOR OUR TEAMMATES!
TIME TO THROW IN THE RESERVES, SERSI...
URGENT CALL FOR YOU ON THE SECURE LINE, SIR!
...NAMELY, US!
NSC HEAD-QUARTERS?
AGENT RAYMOND SIKORSKY HERE...
WHAT? THAT CAN'T BE, SIR! WHO ORIGINATED THAT--
ULP! THAT HIGH UP, SIR?
I UNDERSTAND. I'LL TELL THEM. GOODBYE, SIR.
CAPTAIN AMERICA, I'M AFRAID THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAS CANCELED THE AVENGERS' CHARTER AS PART OF AN ARMS LIMITATION TREATY WITH THE SOVIET UNION.
CANCELED OUR CHARTER?
MY COUNTRY IS CASTING ASIDE THE AVENGERS AS IF WE WERE YESTERDAY'S PAPERS? WHAT KIND OF--
OUR FELLOW AVENGERS NEED US, CAPTAIN! WE CAN SETTLE THIS LATER...
WE'LL BE BACK, SIKORSKY!
YOU CAN COUNT ON THAT!

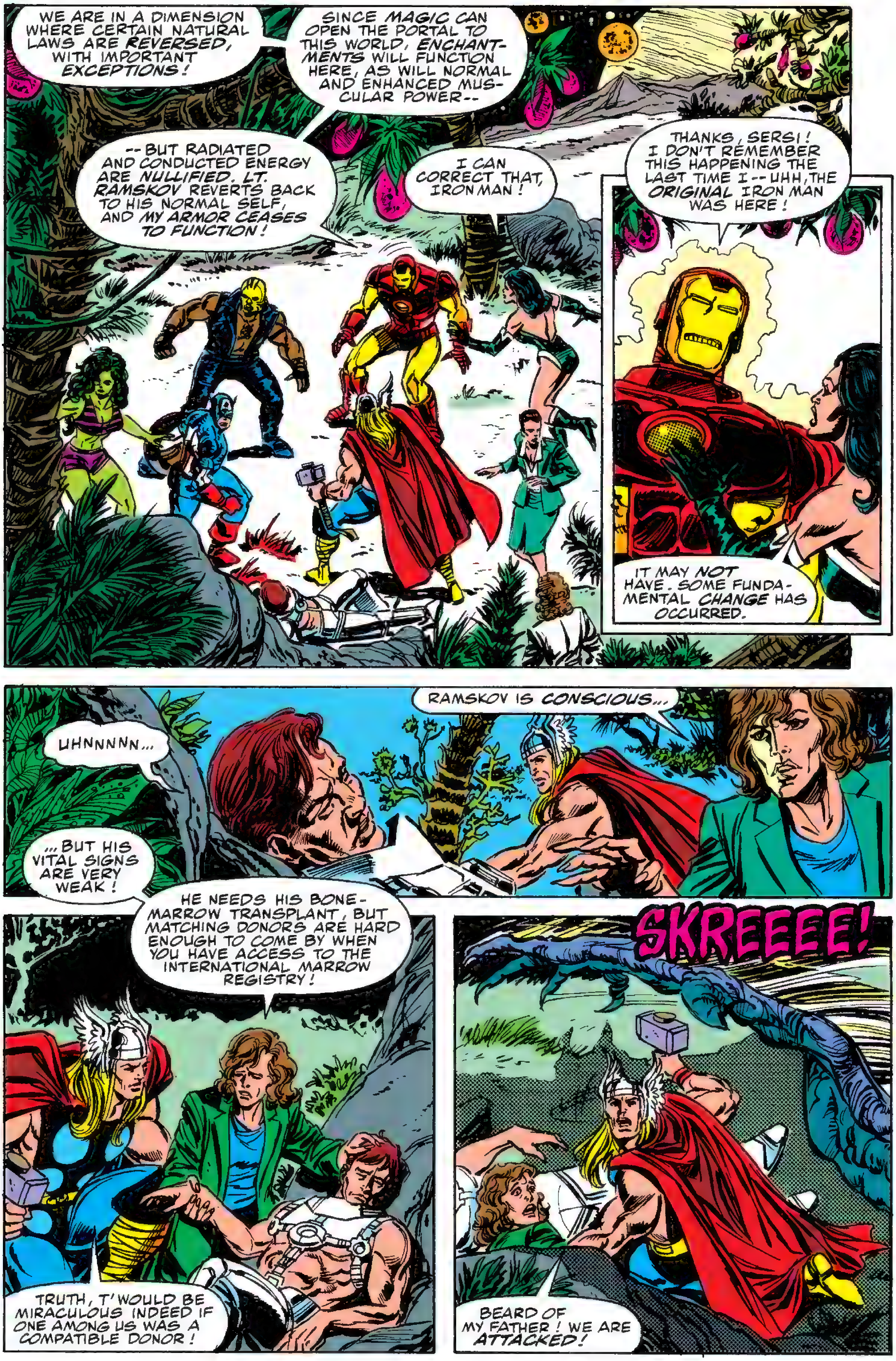

...'TIS A VERITABLE MEGALITHIC CAIRN--
--LO! IT MOVETH!
SH-SH-THOOM!
WOOF! THIS CHARACTER PLAYS ROUGH!
WHAM!
SHE-HULK! THOU HAST--
LOOK OUT BEHIND YOU, THOR!
THE BARBARIC RUS DOTH ATTACK ANEW...

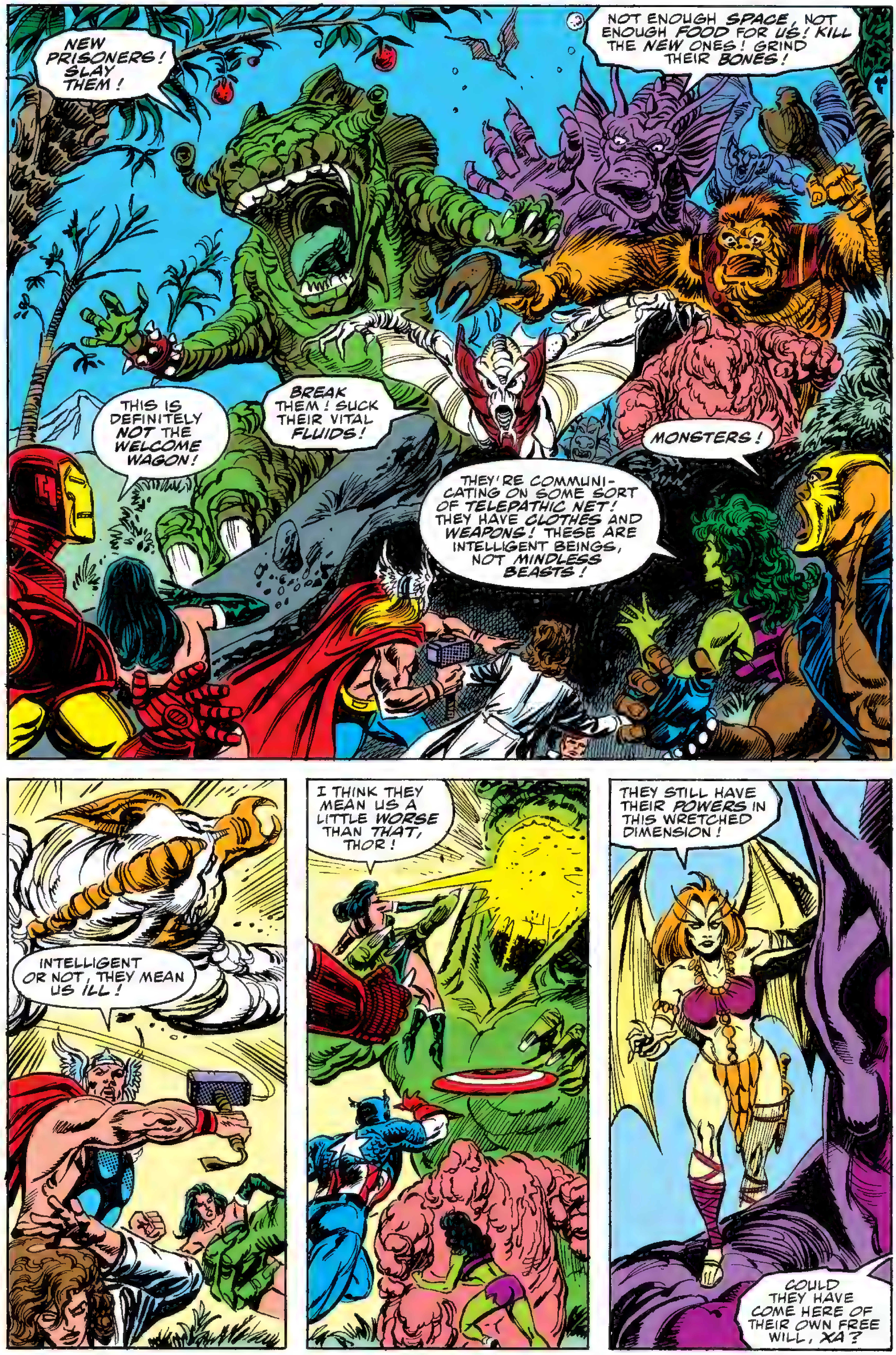

...ONE FELL BLOW FROM MY MIGHTY URU MALLET SHALL--
--NAY! I CANNOT SLAY THIS VICTIM OF CIRCUMSTANCE!
I MUST SUBDUE HIM BY MIGHT AND MAIN--
--BUT WHAT UNEARTHLY POWER DOTH COURSE THROUGH HIS THEWS?
HE HATH CHANGED THE VERY FABRIC OF HIS BEING! HE HATH BECOME AN OTHER, A THING UNMOVED BY ASGARDIAN ENCHANTMENT!
CONTAINMENT DIDN'T WORK, HUH?
I'LL SAY! AND THOR'S NOT HAVING ANY LUCK, EITHER!
REPULSORS ON MAX SHOULD COOL HIS HEELS FOR A FEW SECONDS, AT LEAST...
SHOOP! SHOOP! SHOOP!
...NO CHOICE LEFT IN THE MATTER, OLD FRIEND! WE'VE GOT TO RESORT TO PLAN D!

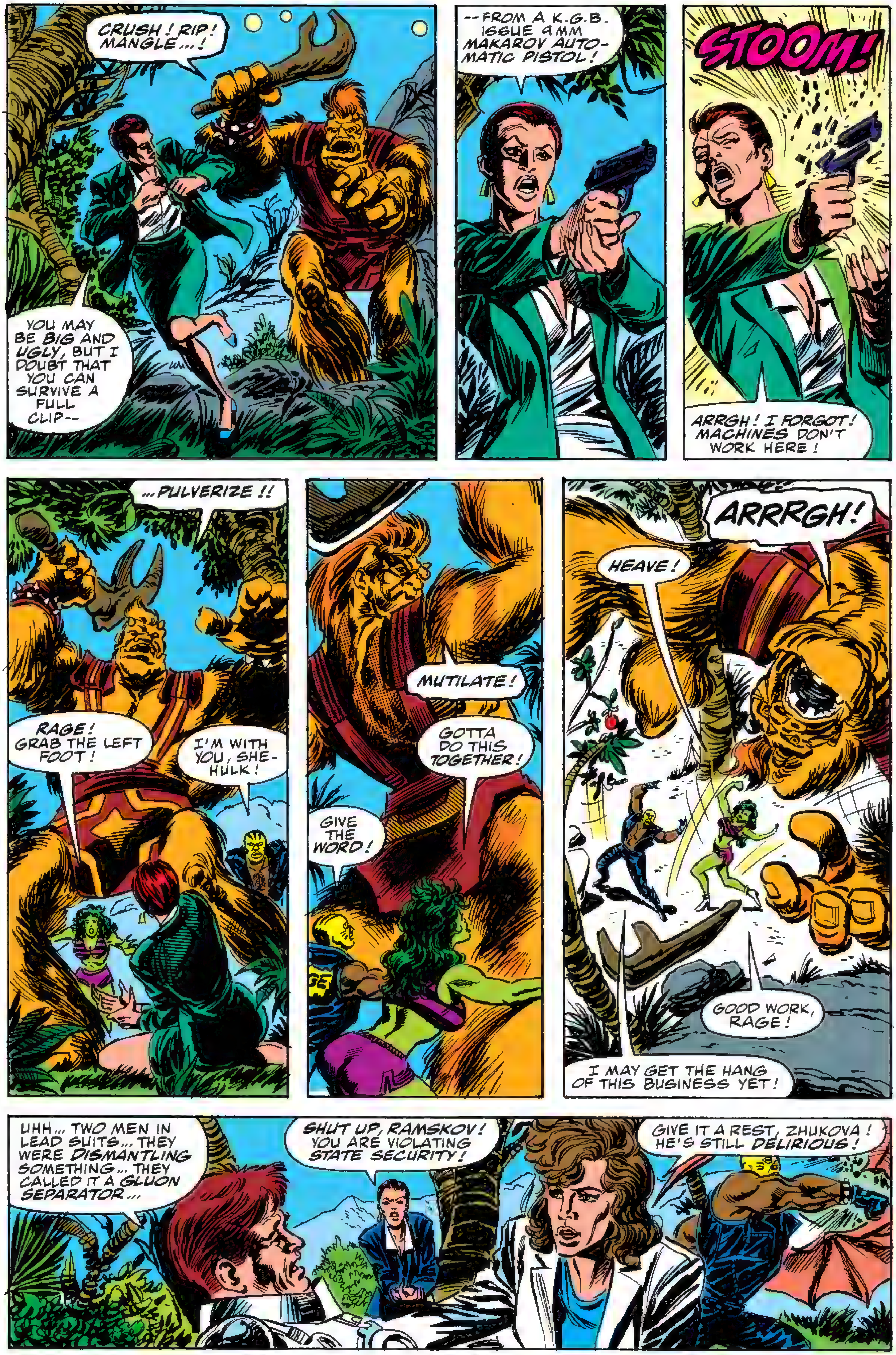

UNDER THE EAST RIVER...
WILLYA LOOKIT THAT? OUTSIDE, RUNNIN' ALONGSIDE THE TRAIN--
WUZZAT, ONE OF THEM MARATHON GUYS?
IN A SUBWAY TUNNEL?
AND GOIN' FASTER THAN AN EXPRESS TRAIN?
MUST BE A SUPER HERO!
NAAAH! TOO UGLY!
HE'S FASTER THAN A SPEEDING BULLET--
THERE'S ANOTHER TRAIN COMING!
HE'S NOT STOPPING!
MAN, THIS IS PROBABLY THE FASTEST WAY TO GET AROUND NEW YORK IF YOU CAN'T FLY...
...BUT I JUST CAN'T HELP FEELING THAT IT'S A BIT DEMEANING!
BACK IN BROOKLYN...
TINY AND ROACH, YOU SHALL BOTH MAINTAIN A VIGILANT SURVEILLANCE TO PRECLUDE THE RETURN OF THAT MASKED MEDDLER WHILE I CONTACT MY SUPPLIER...
WE'LL KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR RAGE, TOO!
REGGAE LIVES
HELLO, KINGPIN?
R.I.P. DP7
LNS + ISL

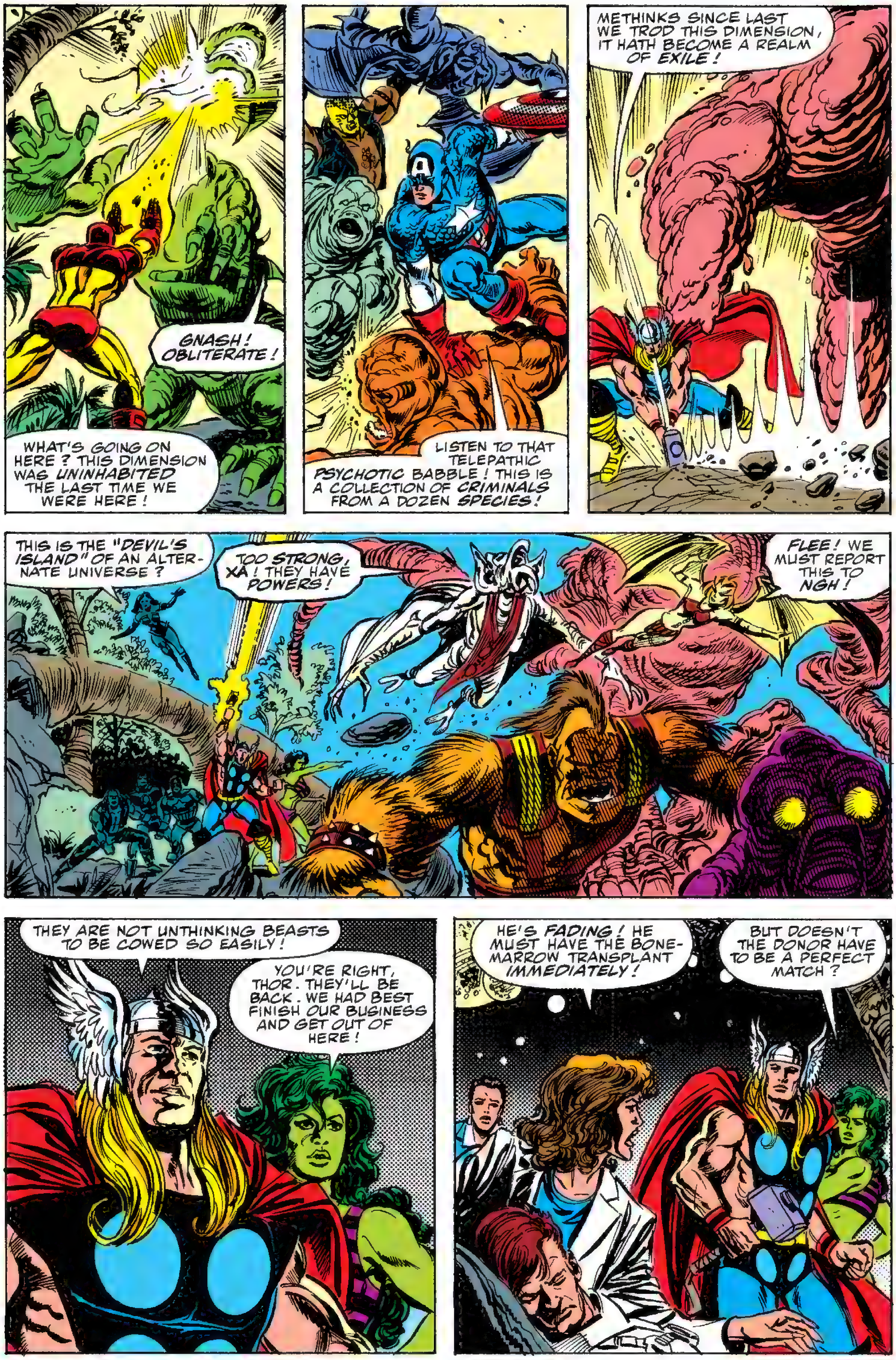

CAPTAIN! THE VERY *AIR* IS ALIVE WITH *STRANGE ENERGIES!*
WHAT'S GOING ON IN THERE, LADIES?
IRON MAN SHOUTED SOMETHING ABOUT *PLAN "D"* AND THOR STARTED SWINGING HIS HAMMER IN A *CIRCLE!*
PLAN "D"? WE HAVEN'T USED THAT TACTIC SINCE WE FOUGHT THE *MASTERS OF EVIL!* *
* *WAAAY BACK IN AVENGERS #16!*
BY THE TANGLED ROOTS OF *YGGDRASIL,* THO' *MJOLNIR* SPINNETH A MIGHTY *VORTEX*, THE *DIMENSIONAL PORTAL* APPEARETH *NOT!*
IT'S NOT WORKING AT ALL!
THIS IS A RISKY MOVE, IRON MAN! THOSE *ALTERNATE DIMENSIONS* ARE NONE *TOO STABLE--*
I KNOW, CAP--AND THOR'S CONTROL OF INTER-DIMENSIONAL PORTALS HASN'T BEEN TOO *EXACT* AS OF LATE!
SERSI! CAN YOU USE *YOUR* POWERS TO *REINFORCE* THOR'S ENCHANTMENT?
A *MODULATING FIELD!* IT *MIGHT* WORK!

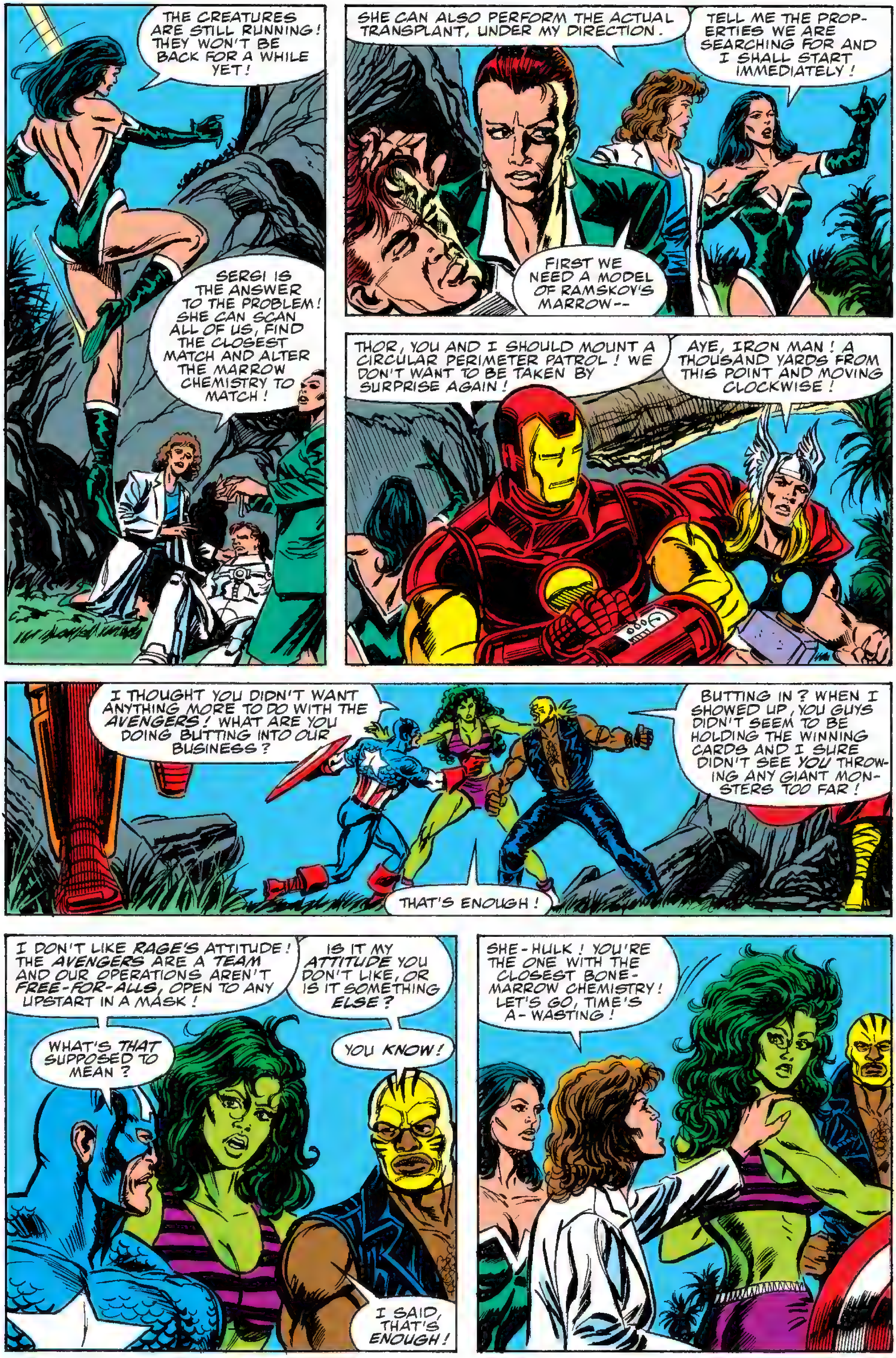

IT IS WORKING!
SMELL THAT OZONE?
THE LIGHT IS SHIFTING IN AND OUT OF PHASE!
ODIN! GIVE ME STRENGTH!
KA-THACK!
YOU GUYS NEED SOME HELP, HERE?
RAGE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
GET BACK, OR YOU'LL BE CAUGHT IN THIS--
--DIMENSIONAL SPACE WARP!
WHERE ARE WE?

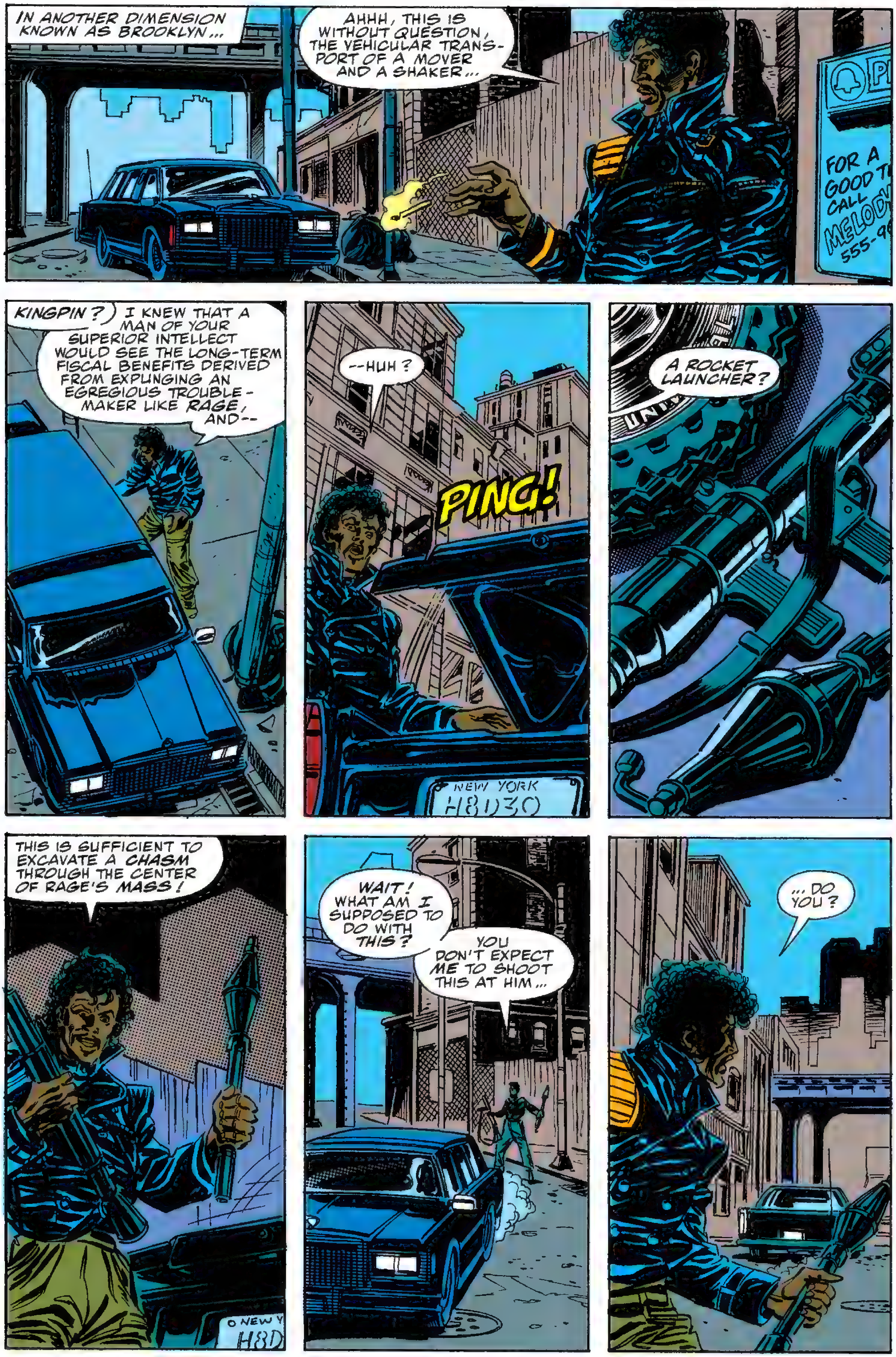

WE ARE IN A DIMENSION WHERE CERTAIN NATURAL LAWS ARE *REVERSED*, WITH IMPORTANT *EXCEPTIONS*!
SINCE *MAGIC* CAN OPEN THE PORTAL TO THIS WORLD, *ENCHANTMENTS* WILL FUNCTION HERE, AS WILL NORMAL AND ENHANCED MUSCULAR POWER--
--BUT RADIATED AND CONDUCTED ENERGY ARE *NULLIFIED*. *LT. RAMSKOV* REVERTS BACK TO HIS NORMAL SELF, AND *MY ARMOR CEASES TO FUNCTION*!
I CAN CORRECT THAT, IRON MAN!
THANKS, SERSI! I DON'T REMEMBER THIS HAPPENING THE LAST TIME I--UHH, THE *ORIGINAL* IRON MAN WAS HERE!
IT MAY *NOT* HAVE. SOME FUNDAMENTAL *CHANGE* HAS OCCURRED.
UHNNNNN...
RAMSKOV IS *CONSCIOUS*...
...BUT HIS VITAL SIGNS ARE VERY WEAK!
HE NEEDS HIS BONE-MARROW TRANSPLANT, BUT MATCHING DONORS ARE HARD ENOUGH TO COME BY WHEN YOU HAVE ACCESS TO THE INTERNATIONAL MARROW REGISTRY!
TRUTH, T'WOULD BE MIRACULOUS INDEED IF ONE AMONG US WAS A COMPATIBLE DONOR!
SKREEEE!
BEARD OF MY FATHER! WE ARE *ATTACKED*!

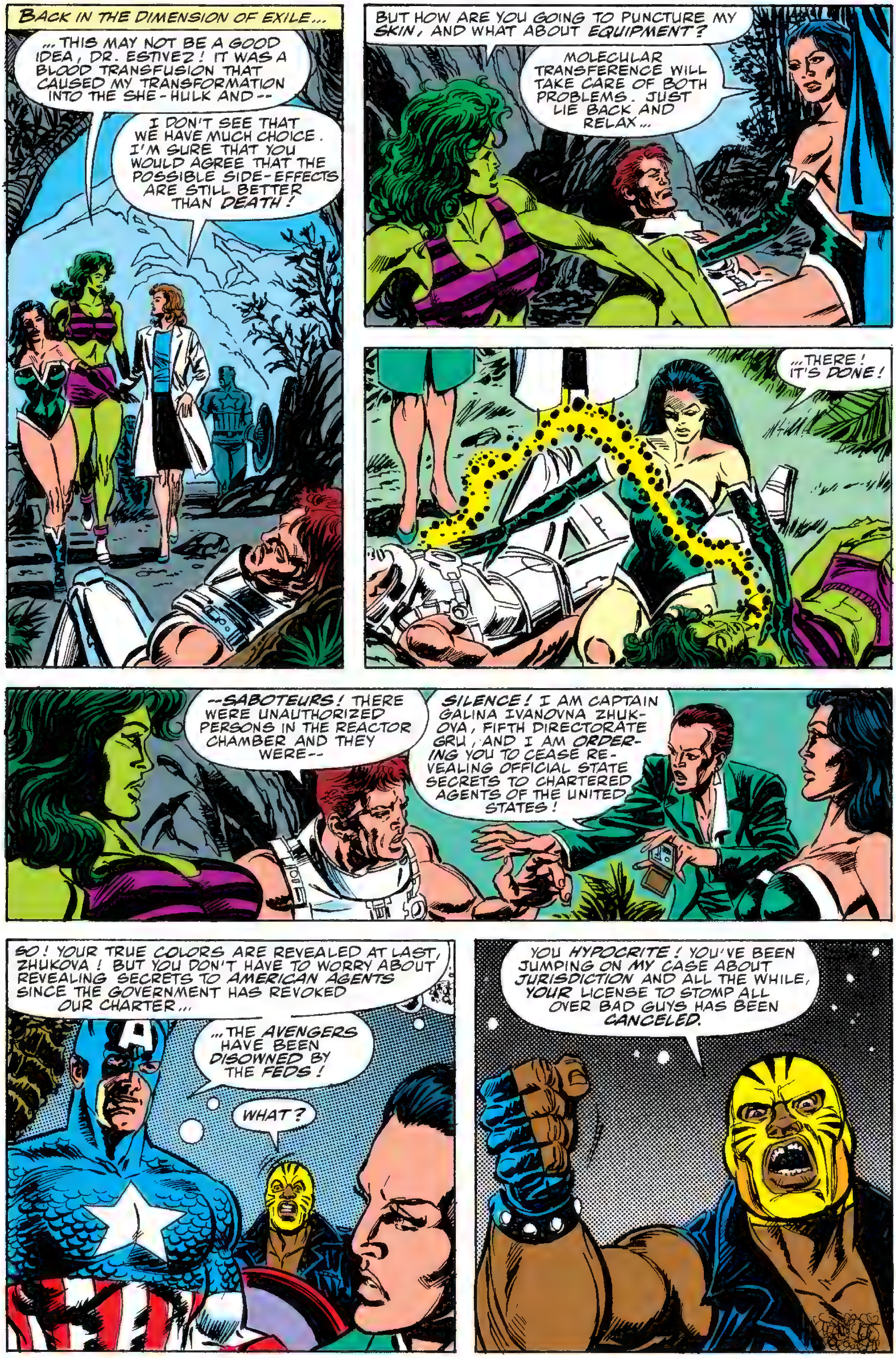

NEW PRISONERS! SLAY THEM!
NOT ENOUGH SPACE, NOT ENOUGH FOOD FOR US! KILL THE NEW ONES! GRIND THEIR BONES!
THIS IS DEFINITELY NOT THE WELCOME WAGON!
BREAK THEM! SUCK THEIR VITAL FLUIDS!
MONSTERS!
THEY'RE COMMUNICATING ON SOME SORT OF TELEPATHIC NET! THEY HAVE CLOTHES AND WEAPONS! THESE ARE INTELLIGENT BEINGS, NOT MINDLESS BEASTS!
INTELLIGENT OR NOT, THEY MEAN US ILL!
I THINK THEY MEAN US A LITTLE WORSE THAN THAT, THOR!
THEY STILL HAVE THEIR POWERS IN THIS WRETCHED DIMENSION!
COULD THEY HAVE COME HERE OF THEIR OWN FREE WILL, XA?

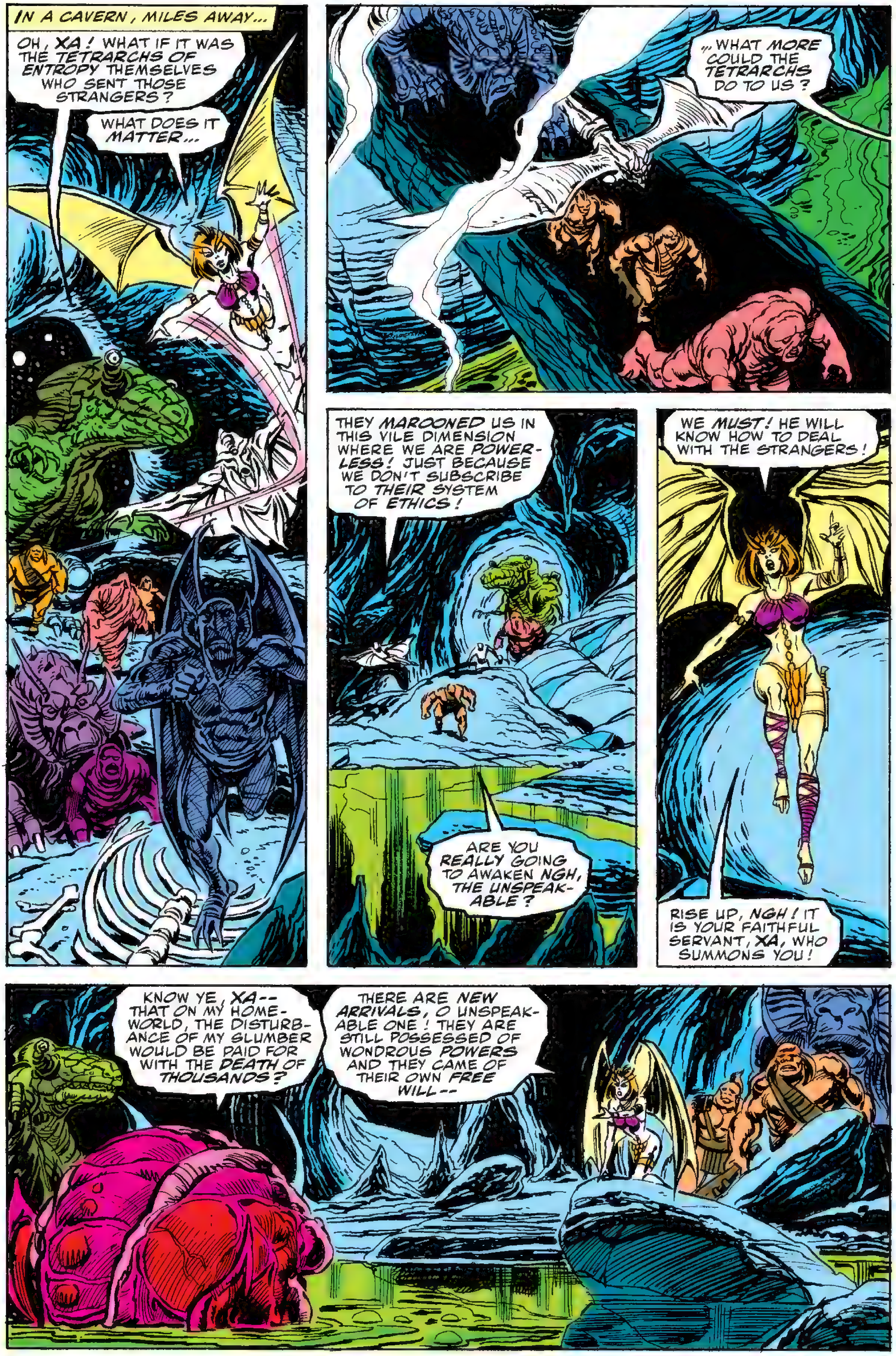

CRUSH! RIP! MANGLE...!
YOU MAY BE BIG AND UGLY, BUT I DOUBT THAT YOU CAN SURVIVE A FULL CLIP--
--FROM A K.G.B. ISSUE 9MM MAKAROV AUTOMATIC PISTOL!
STOOM!
ARRGH! I FORGOT! MACHINES DON'T WORK HERE!
...PULVERIZE!!
RAGE! GRAB THE LEFT FOOT!
I'M WITH YOU, SHE-HULK!
MUTILATE!
GOTTA DO THIS TOGETHER!
GIVE THE WORD!
ARRRGH!
HEAVE!
GOOD WORK, RAGE!
I MAY GET THE HANG OF THIS BUSINESS YET!
UHH... TWO MEN IN LEAD SUITS... THEY WERE DISMANTLING SOMETHING... THEY CALLED IT A GLUON SEPARATOR...
SHUT UP, RAMSKOV! YOU ARE VIOLATING STATE SECURITY!
GIVE IT A REST, ZHUKOVA! HE'S STILL DELIRIOUS!

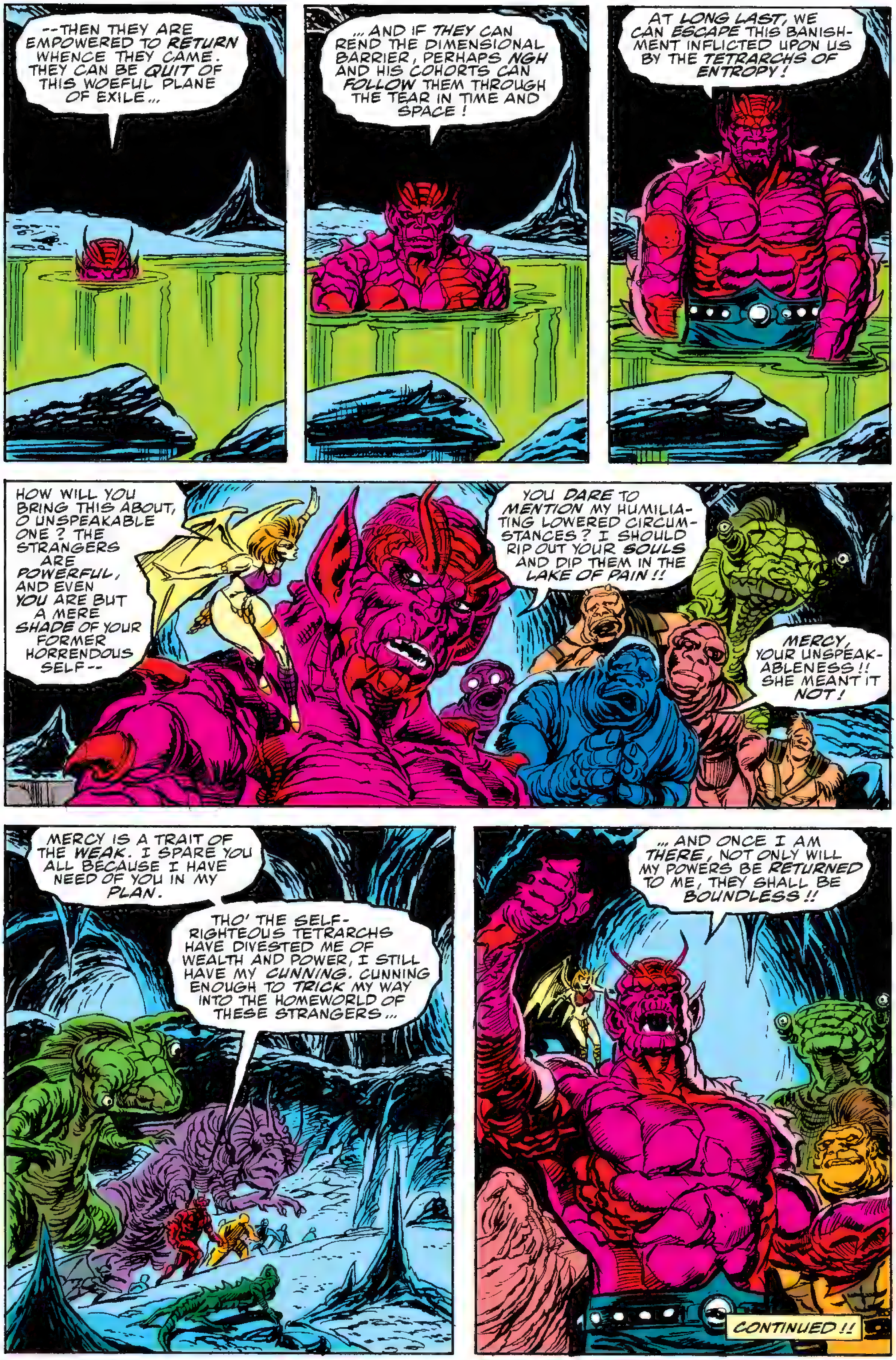

GNASH! OBLITERATE!
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? THIS DIMENSION WAS *UNINHABITED* THE LAST TIME WE WERE HERE!
LISTEN TO THAT TELEPATHIC *PSYCHOTIC* BABBLE! THIS IS A COLLECTION OF *CRIMINALS* FROM A DOZEN *SPECIES*!
METHINKS SINCE LAST WE TROD THIS DIMENSION, IT HATH BECOME A REALM OF *EXILE*!
THIS IS THE *"DEVIL'S ISLAND"* OF AN ALTERNATE UNIVERSE?
TOO *STRONG*, *XA*! THEY HAVE *POWERS*!
FLEE! WE MUST REPORT THIS TO *NGH*!
THEY ARE NOT UNTHINKING BEASTS TO BE COWED SO EASILY!
YOU'RE RIGHT, THOR. THEY'LL BE BACK. WE HAD BEST FINISH OUR BUSINESS AND GET OUT OF HERE!
HE'S *FADING*! HE MUST HAVE THE BONE-MARROW TRANSPLANT *IMMEDIATELY*!
BUT DOESN'T THE DONOR HAVE TO BE A PERFECT MATCH?


THE CREATURES ARE STILL RUNNING! THEY WON'T BE BACK FOR A WHILE YET!
SERSI IS THE ANSWER TO THE PROBLEM! SHE CAN SCAN ALL OF US, FIND THE CLOSEST MATCH AND ALTER THE MARROW CHEMISTRY TO MATCH!
SHE CAN ALSO PERFORM THE ACTUAL TRANSPLANT, UNDER MY DIRECTION.
TELL ME THE PROPERTIES WE ARE SEARCHING FOR AND I SHALL START IMMEDIATELY!
FIRST WE NEED A MODEL OF RAMSKOV'S MARROW--
THOR, YOU AND I SHOULD MOUNT A CIRCULAR PERIMETER PATROL! WE DON'T WANT TO BE TAKEN BY SURPRISE AGAIN!
AYE, IRON MAN! A THOUSAND YARDS FROM THIS POINT AND MOVING CLOCKWISE!
I THOUGHT YOU DIDN'T WANT ANYTHING MORE TO DO WITH THE *AVENGERS!* WHAT ARE YOU DOING BUTTING INTO OUR BUSINESS?
BUTTING IN? WHEN I SHOWED UP, YOU GUYS DIDN'T SEEM TO BE HOLDING THE WINNING CARDS AND I SURE DIDN'T SEE *YOU* THROWING ANY GIANT MONSTERS TOO FAR!
THAT'S ENOUGH!
I DON'T LIKE *RAGE'S* ATTITUDE! THE *AVENGERS* ARE A *TEAM* AND OUR OPERATIONS AREN'T *FREE-FOR-ALLS,* OPEN TO ANY UPSTART IN A MASK!
IS IT MY *ATTITUDE* YOU DON'T LIKE, OR IS IT SOMETHING *ELSE?*
WHAT'S *THAT* SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
YOU *KNOW!*
I SAID, THAT'S *ENOUGH!*
SHE-HULK! YOU'RE THE ONE WITH THE CLOSEST BONE-MARROW CHEMISTRY! LET'S GO, TIME'S A-WASTING!


IN ANOTHER DIMENSION KNOWN AS BROOKLYN...
AHHH, THIS IS WITHOUT QUESTION, THE VEHICULAR TRANSPORT OF A MOVER AND A SHAKER...
FOR A GOOD T
CALL MELOD
555-9
KINGPIN?
I KNEW THAT A MAN OF YOUR SUPERIOR INTELLECT WOULD SEE THE LONG-TERM FISCAL BENEFITS DERIVED FROM EXPUNGING AN EGREGIOUS TROUBLE-MAKER LIKE RAGE, AND--
--HUH?
PING!
NEW YORK H8D30
A ROCKET LAUNCHER?
THIS IS SUFFICIENT TO EXCAVATE A CHASM THROUGH THE CENTER OF RAGE'S MASS!
WAIT! WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO WITH THIS?
YOU DON'T EXPECT ME TO SHOOT THIS AT HIM...
...DO YOU?


BACK IN THE DIMENSION OF EXILE...
...THIS MAY NOT BE A GOOD IDEA, DR. ESTIVEZ! IT WAS A BLOOD TRANSFUSION THAT CAUSED MY TRANSFORMATION INTO THE SHE-HULK AND--
I DON'T SEE THAT WE HAVE MUCH CHOICE. I'M SURE THAT YOU WOULD AGREE THAT THE POSSIBLE SIDE-EFFECTS ARE STILL BETTER THAN *DEATH*!
BUT HOW ARE YOU GOING TO PUNCTURE MY *SKIN*, AND WHAT ABOUT *EQUIPMENT*?
MOLECULAR TRANSFERENCE WILL TAKE CARE OF BOTH PROBLEMS. JUST LIE BACK AND RELAX...
...THERE! IT'S *DONE*!
--*SABOTEURS*! THERE WERE UNAUTHORIZED PERSONS IN THE REACTOR CHAMBER AND THEY WERE--
SILENCE! I AM CAPTAIN GALINA IVANOVNA ZHUKOVA, FIFTH DIRECTORATE GRU, AND I AM *ORDERING* YOU TO CEASE REVEALING OFFICIAL STATE SECRETS TO CHARTERED AGENTS OF THE UNITED STATES!
SO! YOUR TRUE *COLORS* ARE REVEALED AT LAST, ZHUKOVA! BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT REVEALING SECRETS TO *AMERICAN AGENTS* SINCE THE *GOVERNMENT* HAS REVOKED OUR CHARTER...
...THE *AVENGERS* HAVE BEEN *DISOWNED* BY THE *FEDS*!
WHAT?
YOU *HYPOCRITE*! YOU'VE BEEN JUMPING ON *MY* CASE ABOUT *JURISDICTION* AND ALL THE WHILE, *YOUR* LICENSE TO STOMP ALL OVER BAD GUYS HAS BEEN *CANCELED*.


IN A CAVERN, MILES AWAY...
OH, XA! WHAT IF IT WAS THE TETRARCHS OF ENTROPY THEMSELVES WHO SENT THOSE STRANGERS?
WHAT DOES IT MATTER...
...WHAT MORE COULD THE TETRARCHS DO TO US?
THEY MAROONED US IN THIS VILE DIMENSION WHERE WE ARE POWERLESS! JUST BECAUSE WE DON'T SUBSCRIBE TO THEIR SYSTEM OF ETHICS!
ARE YOU REALLY GOING TO AWAKEN NGH, THE UNSPEAKABLE?
WE MUST! HE WILL KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH THE STRANGERS!
RISE UP, NGH! IT IS YOUR FAITHFUL SERVANT, XA, WHO SUMMONS YOU!
KNOW YE, XA-- THAT ON MY HOMEWORLD, THE DISTURBANCE OF MY SLUMBER WOULD BE PAID FOR WITH THE DEATH OF THOUSANDS?
THERE ARE NEW ARRIVALS, O UNSPEAKABLE ONE! THEY ARE STILL POSSESSED OF WONDROUS POWERS AND THEY CAME OF THEIR OWN FREE WILL--


--THEN THEY ARE EMPOWERED TO *RETURN* WHENCE THEY CAME. THEY CAN BE *QUIT* OF THIS WOEFUL PLANE OF EXILE...
...AND IF *THEY* CAN REND THE DIMENSIONAL BARRIER, PERHAPS *NGH* AND HIS COHORTS CAN *FOLLOW* THEM THROUGH THE TEAR IN TIME AND SPACE!
AT *LONG LAST*, WE CAN *ESCAPE* THIS BANISHMENT INFLICTED UPON US BY THE *TETRARCHS OF ENTROPY*!
HOW WILL *YOU* BRING THIS ABOUT, O UNSPEAKABLE ONE? THE STRANGERS ARE *POWERFUL*, AND EVEN *YOU* ARE BUT A MERE *SHADE* OF YOUR FORMER HORRENDOUS SELF--
YOU *DARE* TO *MENTION* MY HUMILIATING LOWERED CIRCUMSTANCES? I SHOULD RIP OUT YOUR *SOULS* AND DIP THEM IN THE *LAKE OF PAIN*!!
MERCY, YOUR UNSPEAKABLENESS!! SHE MEANT IT *NOT*!
MERCY IS A TRAIT OF THE *WEAK*. I SPARE YOU ALL BECAUSE I HAVE NEED OF YOU IN MY *PLAN*.
THO' THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS TETRARCHS HAVE DIVESTED ME OF WEALTH AND POWER, I STILL HAVE MY *CUNNING*. CUNNING ENOUGH TO *TRICK* MY WAY INTO THE HOMEWORLD OF THESE STRANGERS...
...AND ONCE I AM *THERE*, NOT ONLY WILL MY POWERS BE *RETURNED* TO ME, THEY SHALL BE *BOUNDLESS*!!
CONTINUED!!

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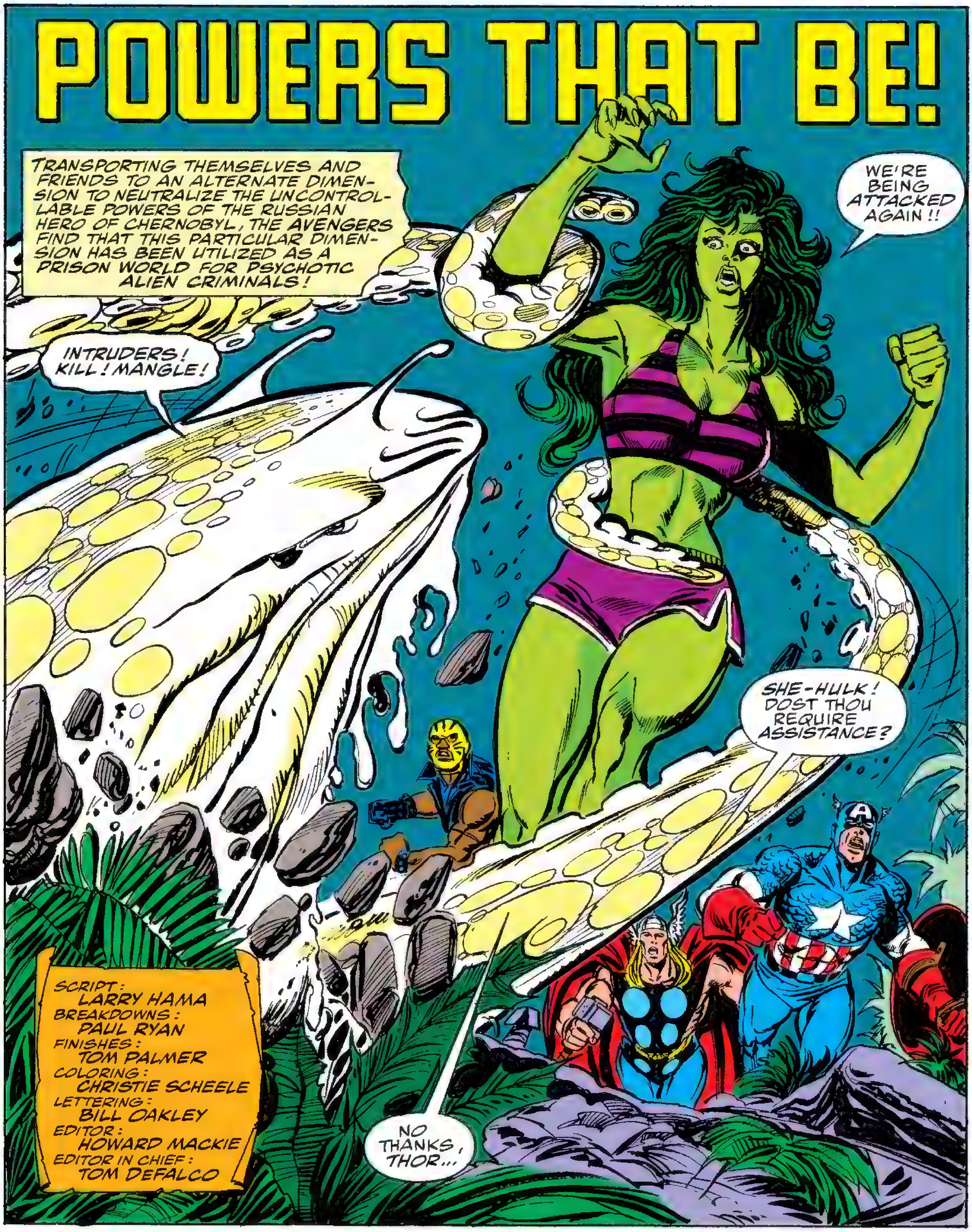
328
JAN
02458
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
THE ORIGIN OF THE MAN CALLED RAGE!
TM
RYAN/PALMER

TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND! STAN LEE PRESENTS . . . THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!


POWERS THAT BE!
TRANSPORTING THEMSELVES AND FRIENDS TO AN ALTERNATE DIMENSION TO NEUTRALIZE THE UNCONTROLLABLE POWERS OF THE RUSSIAN HERO OF CHERNOBYL, THE AVENGERS FIND THAT THIS PARTICULAR DIMENSION HAS BEEN UTILIZED AS A PRISON WORLD FOR PSYCHOTIC ALIEN CRIMINALS!
WE'RE BEING ATTACKED AGAIN!!
INTRUDERS! KILL! MANGLE!
SHE-HULK! DOST THOU REQUIRE ASSISTANCE?
NO THANKS, THOR...
SCRIPT: LARRY HAMA
BREAKDOWNS: PAUL RYAN
FINISHES: TOM PALMER
COLORING: CHRISTIE SCHEELE
LETTERING: BILL OAKLEY
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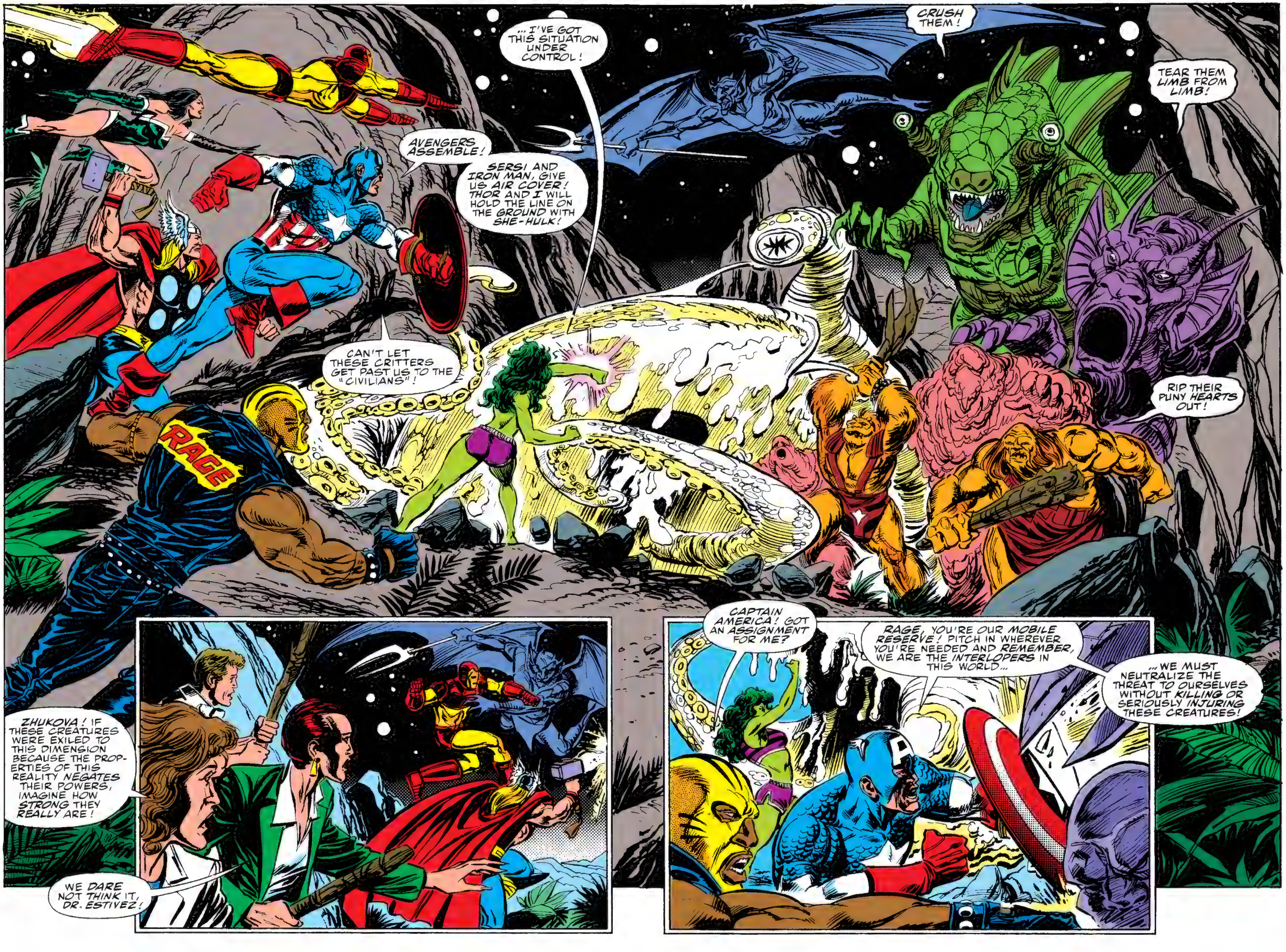
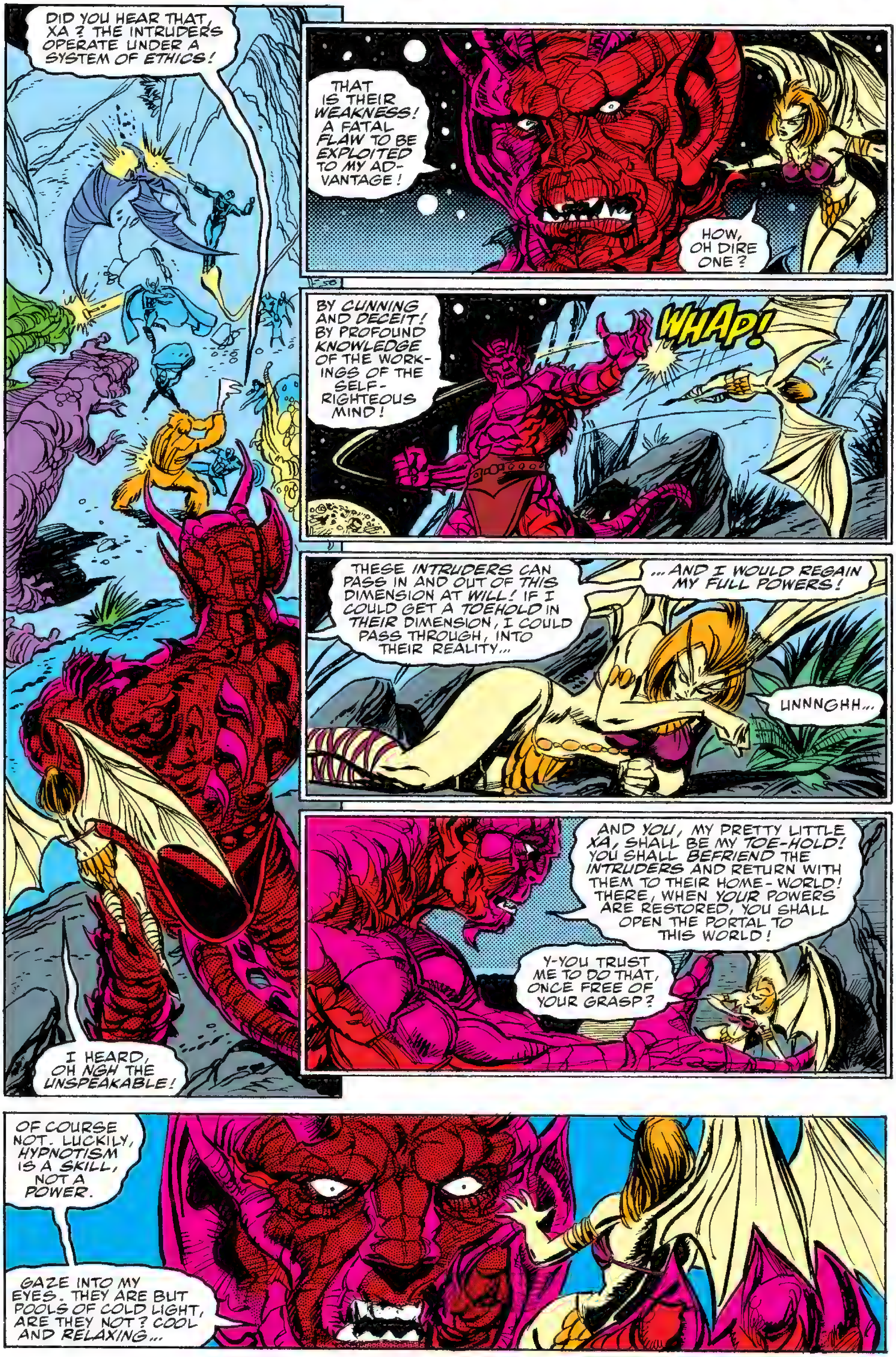
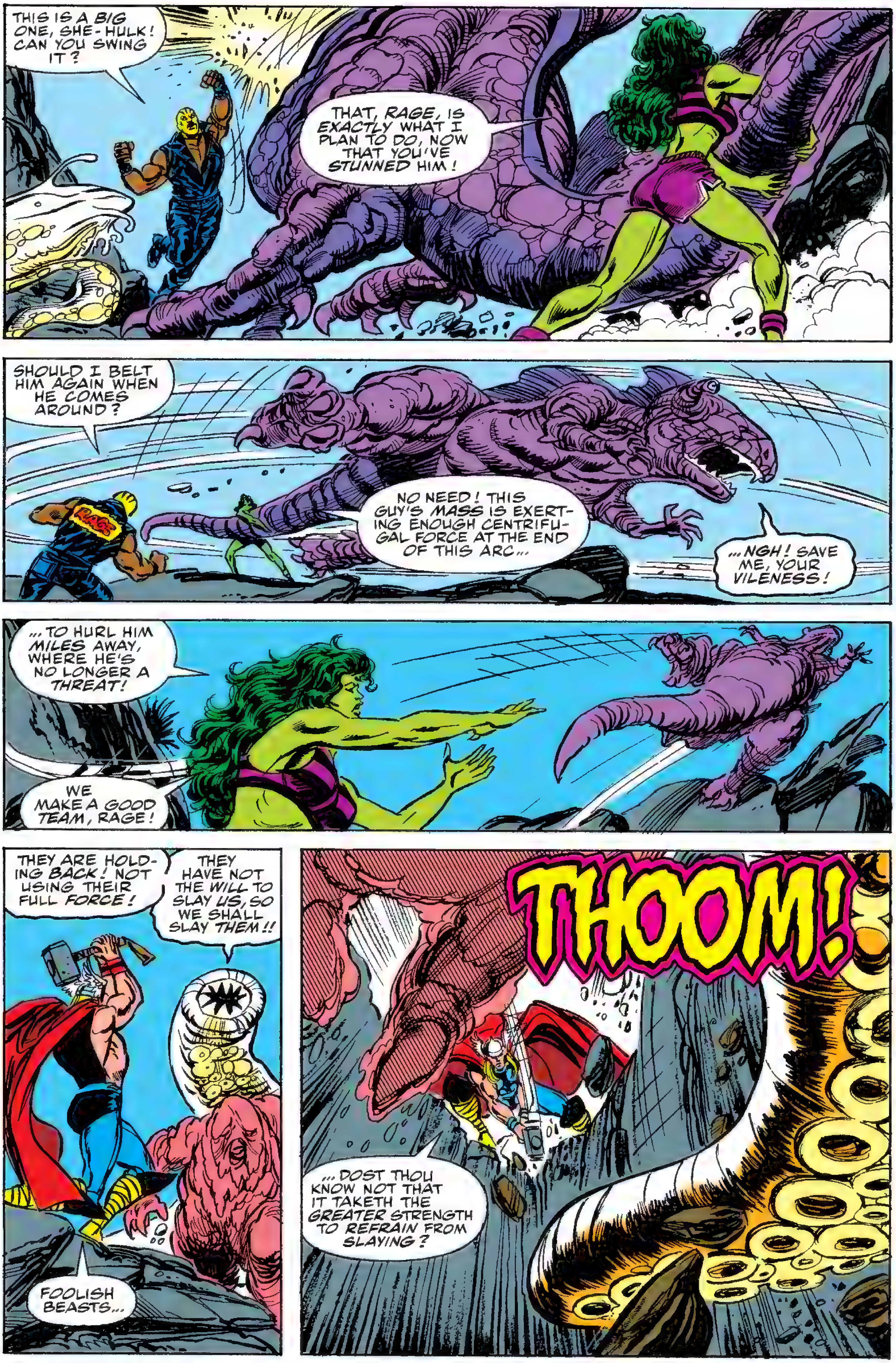
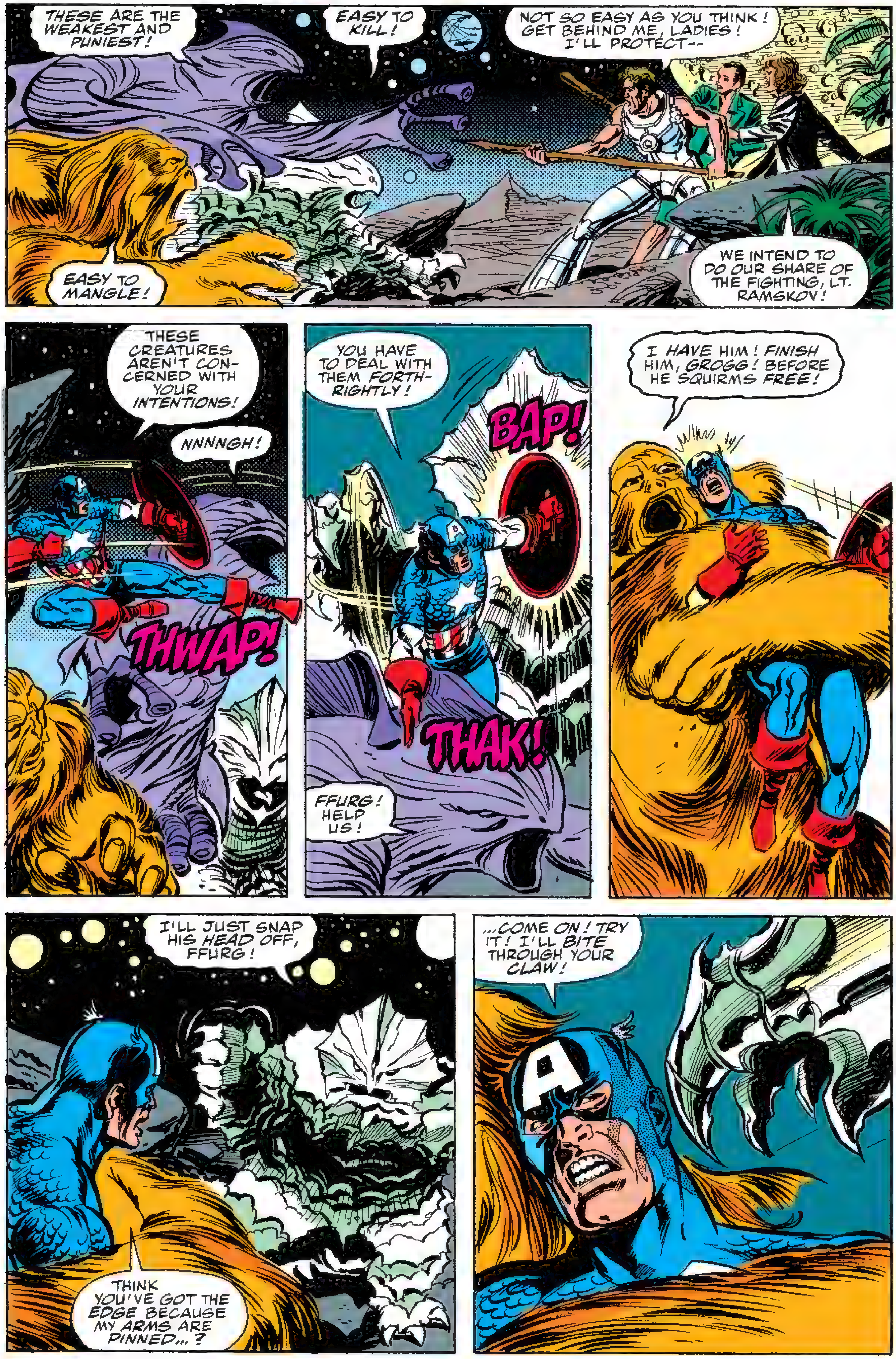
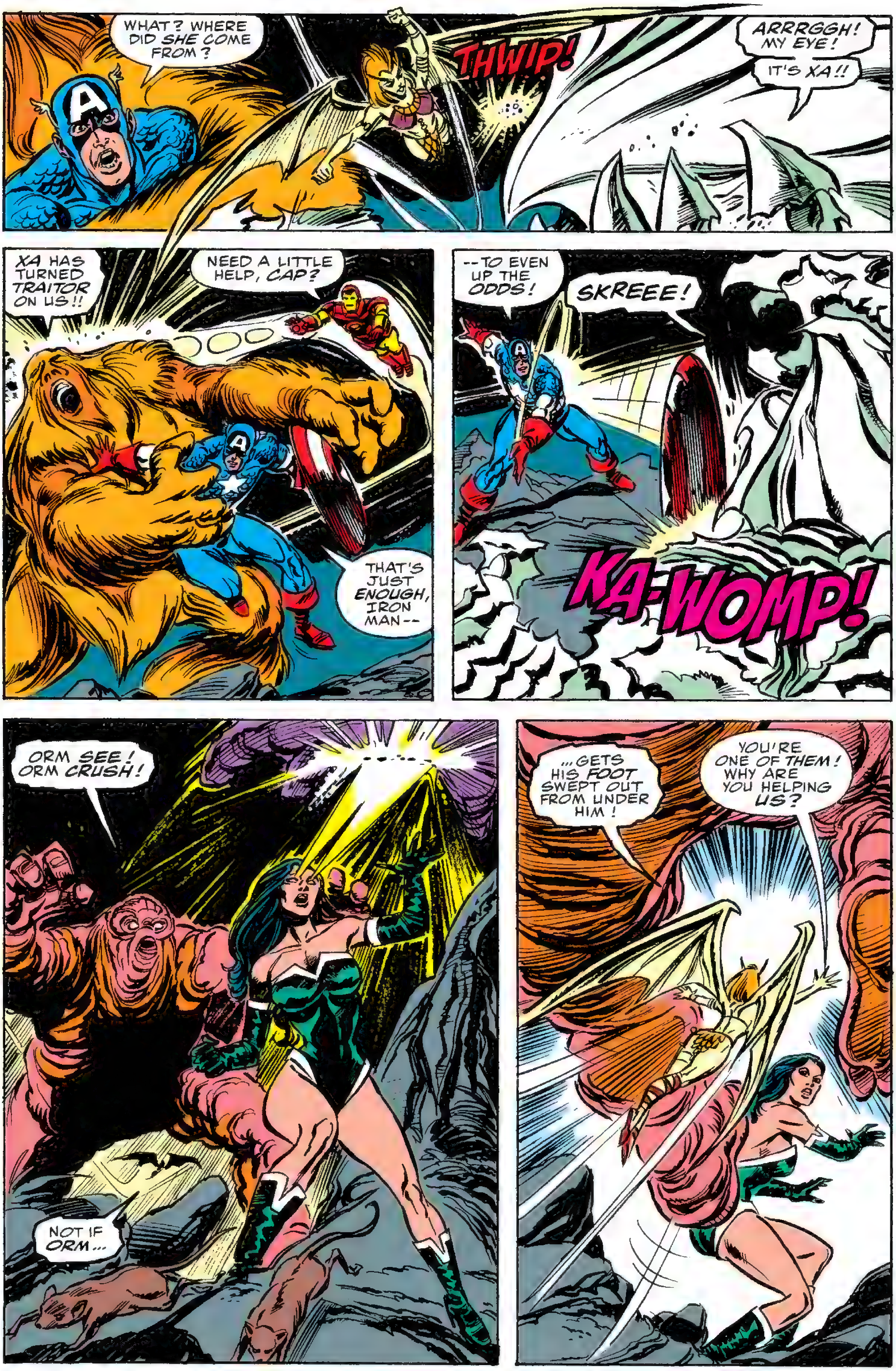
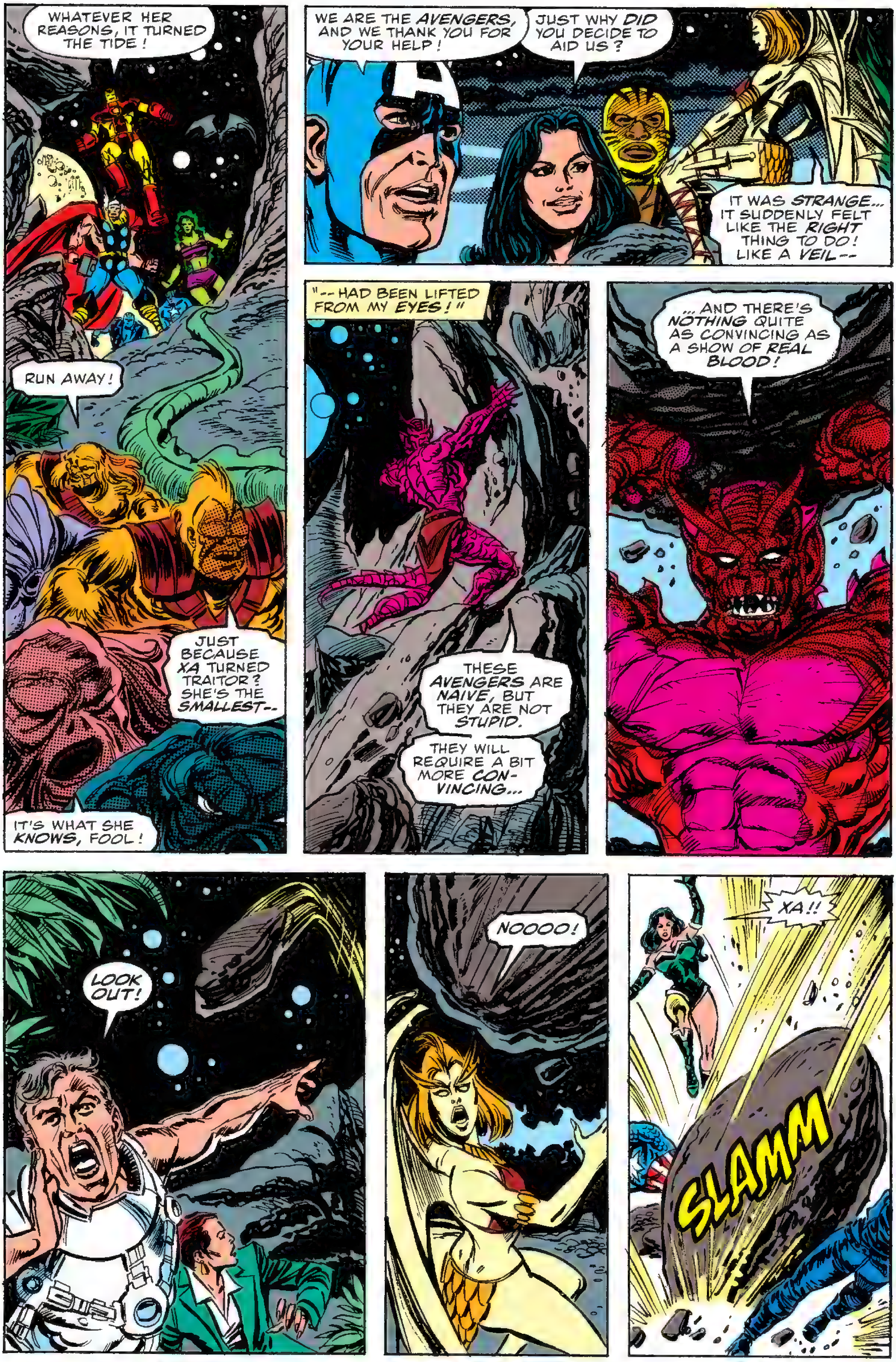

AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!
SERSI AND IRON MAN, GIVE US AIR COVER! THOR AND I WILL HOLD THE LINE ON THE GROUND WITH SHE-HULK!
...I'VE GOT THIS SITUATION UNDER CONTROL!
CRUSH THEM!
TEAR THEM LIMB FROM LIMB!
CAN'T LET THESE CRITTERS GET PAST US TO THE "CIVILIANS"!
RAGE
RIP THEIR PUNY HEARTS OUT!
ZHUKOVA! IF THESE CREATURES WERE EXILED TO THIS DIMENSION BECAUSE THE PROPERTIES OF THIS REALITY NEGATES THEIR POWERS, IMAGINE HOW STRONG THEY REALLY ARE!
WE DARE NOT THINK IT, DR. ESTIVEZ!
CAPTAIN AMERICA! GOT AN ASSIGNMENT FOR ME?
RAGE, YOU'RE OUR MOBILE RESERVE! PITCH IN WHEREVER YOU'RE NEEDED AND REMEMBER, WE ARE THE INTERLOPERS IN THIS WORLD...
...WE MUST NEUTRALIZE THE THREAT TO OURSELVES WITHOUT KILLING OR SERIOUSLY INJURING THESE CREATURES!

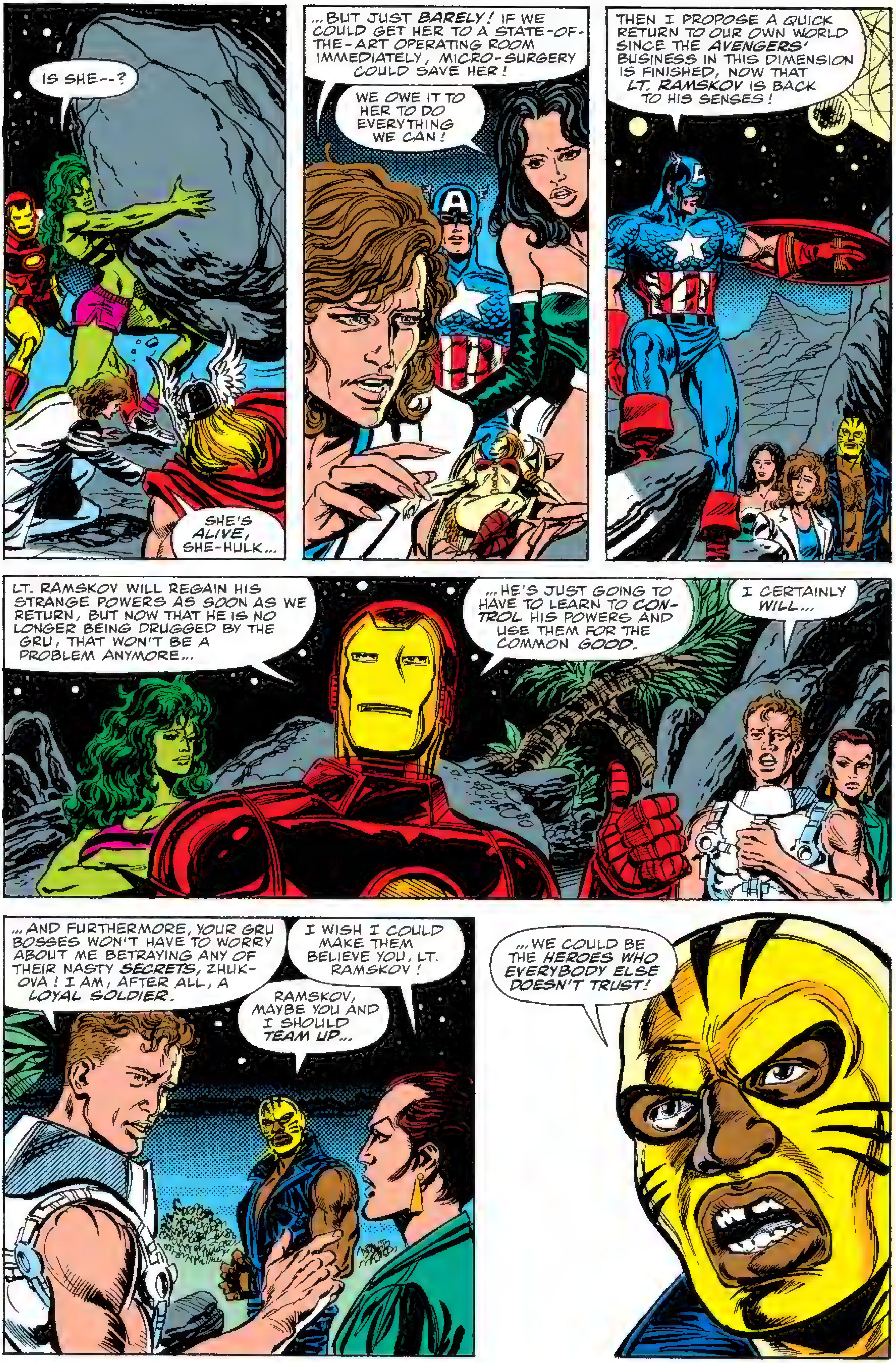

DID YOU HEAR THAT, XA? THE INTRUDERS OPERATE UNDER A SYSTEM OF *ETHICS!*
I HEARD, OH *NGH* THE *UNSPEAKABLE!*
THAT IS THEIR *WEAKNESS!* A FATAL *FLAW* TO BE *EXPLOITED* TO MY ADVANTAGE!
HOW, OH DIRE ONE?
BY *CUNNING* AND *DECEIT!* BY PROFOUND *KNOWLEDGE* OF THE WORKINGS OF THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS MIND!
WHAP!
THESE *INTRUDERS* CAN PASS IN AND OUT OF *THIS* DIMENSION AT *WILL!* IF I COULD GET A *TOEHOLD* IN *THEIR* DIMENSION, I COULD PASS THROUGH, INTO THEIR REALITY...
...AND I WOULD REGAIN MY FULL POWERS!
UNNNGHH...
AND *YOU*, MY PRETTY LITTLE *XA*, SHALL BE MY *TOE-HOLD!* YOU SHALL *BEFRIEND* THE *INTRUDERS* AND RETURN WITH THEM TO THEIR HOME-WORLD! THERE, WHEN *YOUR* POWERS ARE RESTORED, YOU SHALL OPEN THE PORTAL TO THIS WORLD!
Y-YOU TRUST ME TO DO THAT, ONCE FREE OF YOUR GRASP?
OF COURSE NOT. LUCKILY, *HYPNOTISM* IS A *SKILL*, NOT A *POWER*.
GAZE INTO MY EYES. THEY ARE BUT POOLS OF COLD LIGHT, ARE THEY NOT? COOL AND *RELAXING*...

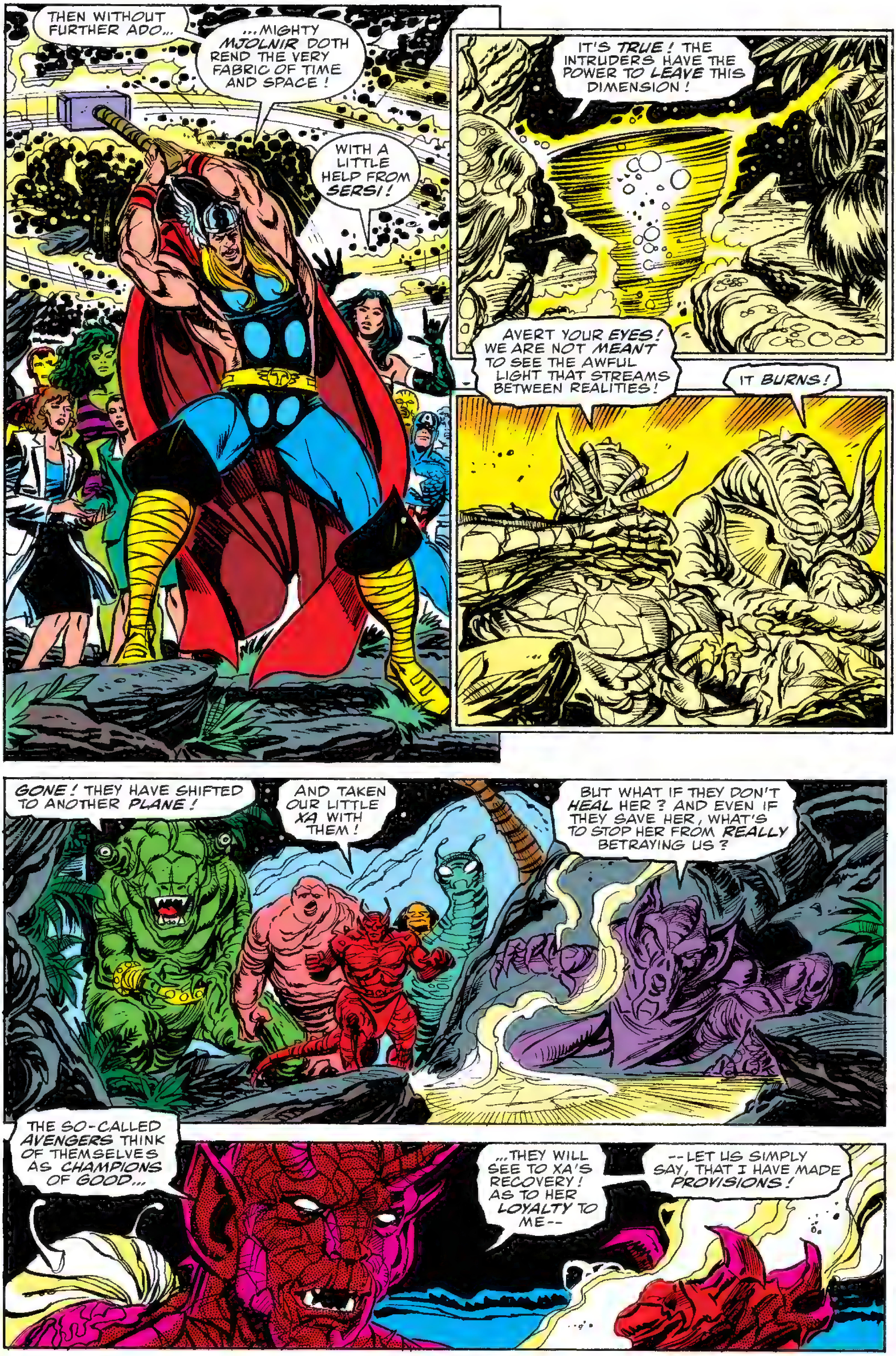

THIS IS A *BIG* ONE, SHE-HULK! CAN YOU SWING IT?
THAT, *RAGE*, IS *EXACTLY* WHAT I PLAN TO DO, NOW THAT YOU'VE *STUNNED* HIM!
SHOULD I BELT HIM AGAIN WHEN HE COMES AROUND?
RAGE
NO NEED! THIS GUY'S *MASS* IS EXERTING ENOUGH CENTRIFUGAL FORCE AT THE END OF THIS ARC...
...NGH! SAVE ME, YOUR *VILENESS*!
...TO HURL HIM *MILES* AWAY, WHERE HE'S NO LONGER A *THREAT!*
WE MAKE A GOOD TEAM, RAGE!
THEY ARE HOLDING *BACK*! NOT USING THEIR FULL *FORCE*!
THEY HAVE NOT THE *WILL* TO SLAY *US*, SO WE SHALL SLAY *THEM*!!
FOOLISH BEASTS...
THOOM!
...DOST THOU KNOW NOT THAT IT TAKETH THE *GREATER STRENGTH* TO *REFRAIN* FROM *SLAYING*?

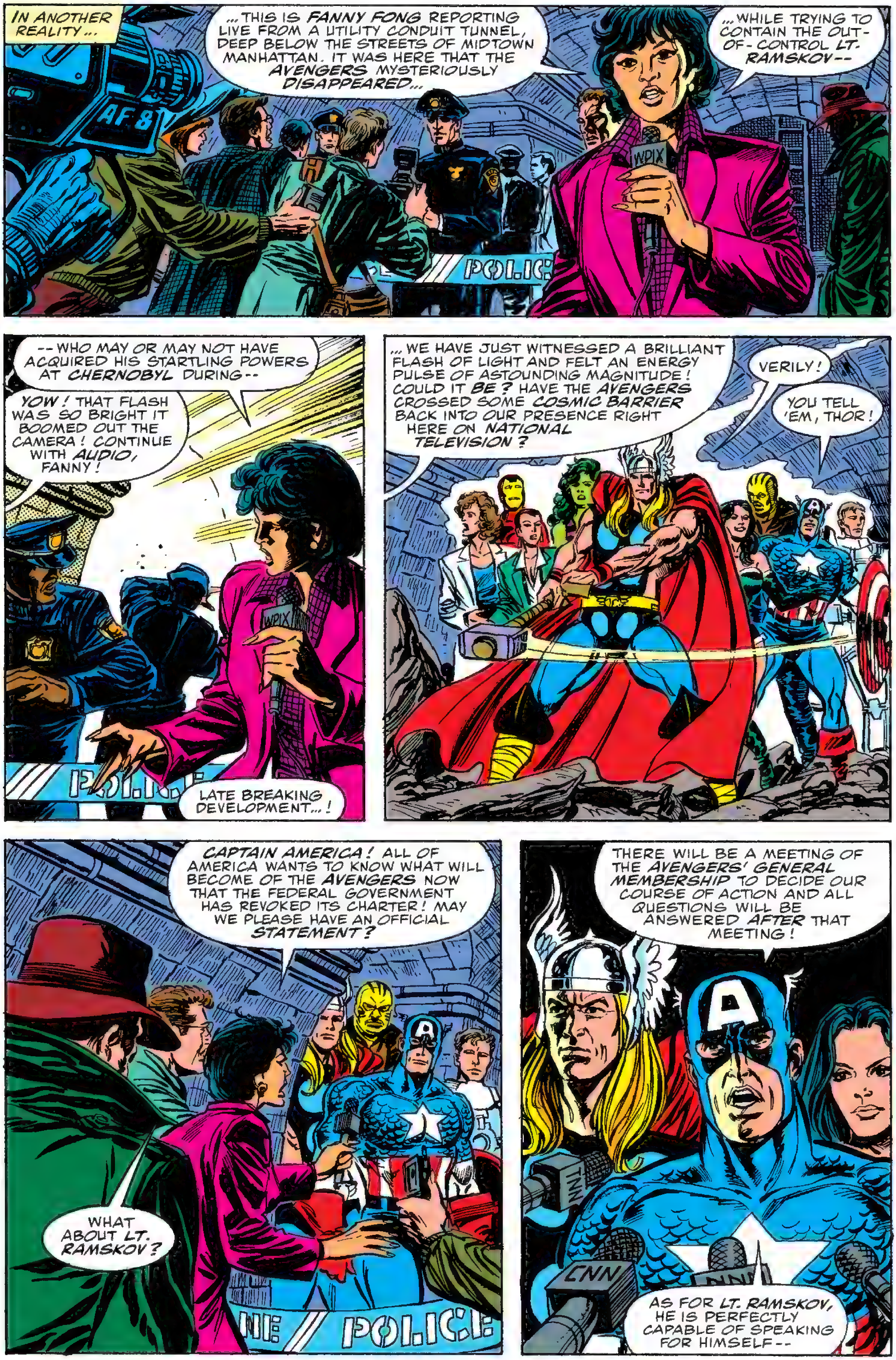

THESE ARE THE WEAKEST AND PUNIEST!
EASY TO KILL!
NOT SO EASY AS YOU THINK! GET BEHIND ME, LADIES! I'LL PROTECT--
EASY TO MANGLE!
WE INTEND TO DO OUR SHARE OF THE FIGHTING, LT. RAMSKOV!
THESE CREATURES AREN'T CONCERNED WITH YOUR INTENTIONS!
NNNNGH!
THWAP!
YOU HAVE TO DEAL WITH THEM FORTHRIGHTLY!
BAP!
THAK!
FFURG! HELP US!
I HAVE HIM! FINISH HIM, GROGG! BEFORE HE SQUIRMS FREE!
I'LL JUST SNAP HIS HEAD OFF, FFURG!
THINK YOU'VE GOT THE EDGE BECAUSE MY ARMS ARE PINNED...?
...COME ON! TRY IT! I'LL BITE THROUGH YOUR CLAW!

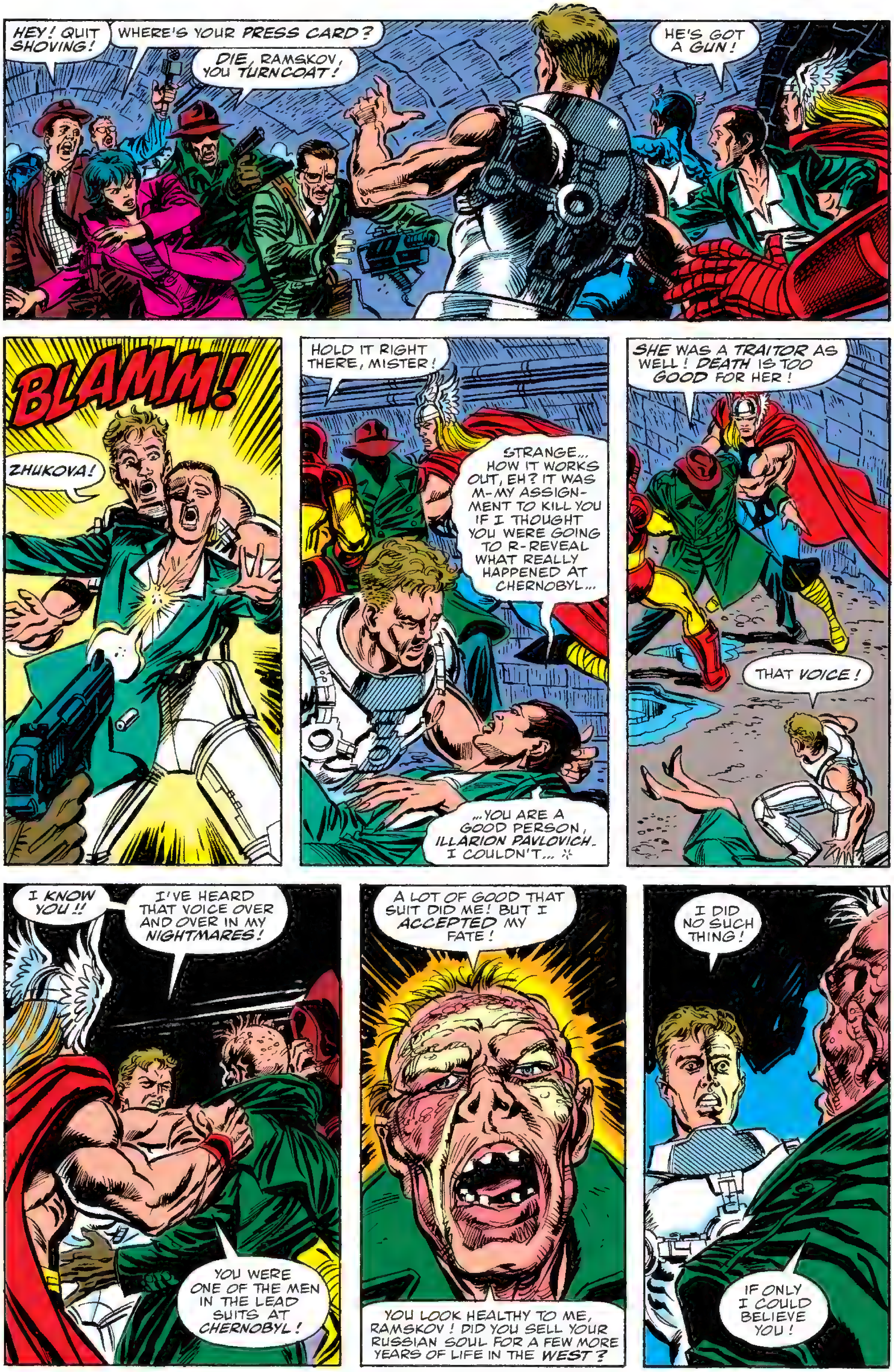

WHAT? WHERE DID SHE COME FROM?
THWIP!
ARRRGGH! MY EYE!
IT'S XA!!
XA HAS TURNED TRAITOR ON US!!
NEED A LITTLE HELP, CAP?
THAT'S JUST ENOUGH, IRON MAN--
--TO EVEN UP THE ODDS!
SKREEE!
KA-WOMP!
ORM SEE! ORM CRUSH!
NOT IF ORM...
...GETS HIS FOOT SWEPT OUT FROM UNDER HIM!
YOU'RE ONE OF THEM! WHY ARE YOU HELPING US?

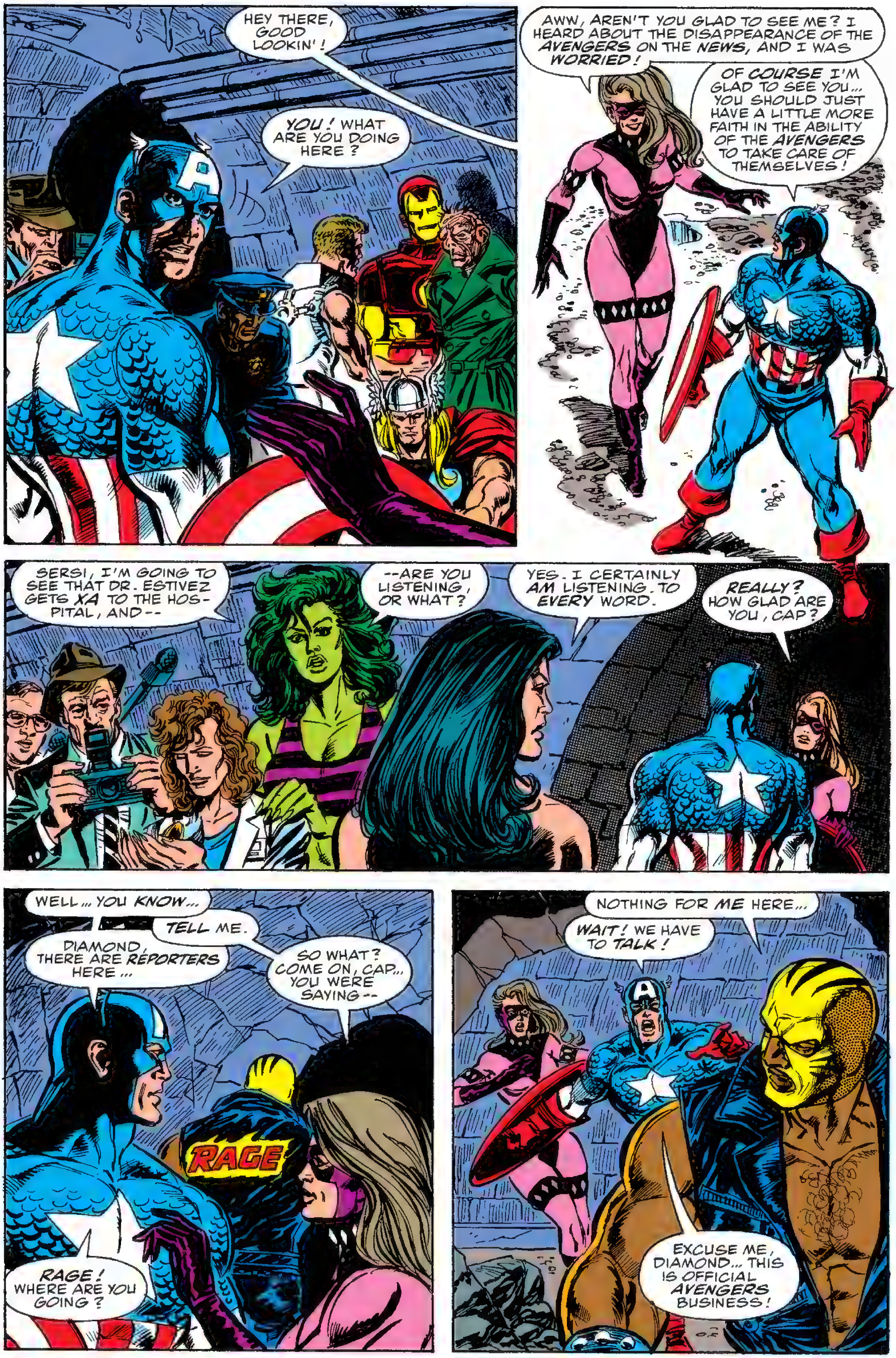

WHATEVER HER REASONS, IT TURNED THE TIDE!
RUN AWAY!
JUST BECAUSE *XA* TURNED TRAITOR? SHE'S THE *SMALLEST*--
IT'S WHAT SHE *KNOWS*, FOOL!
WE ARE THE *AVENGERS*, AND WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!
JUST WHY *DID* YOU DECIDE TO AID US?
IT WAS *STRANGE*... IT SUDDENLY FELT LIKE THE *RIGHT* THING TO DO! LIKE A *VEIL*--
"--HAD BEEN LIFTED FROM MY *EYES!*"
THESE *AVENGERS* ARE *NAIVE*, BUT THEY ARE NOT *STUPID*.
THEY WILL REQUIRE A BIT MORE *CONVINCING*...
...AND THERE'S *NOTHING* QUITE AS CONVINCING AS A SHOW OF *REAL BLOOD!*
LOOK OUT!
NOOOO!
XA!!
SLAMM

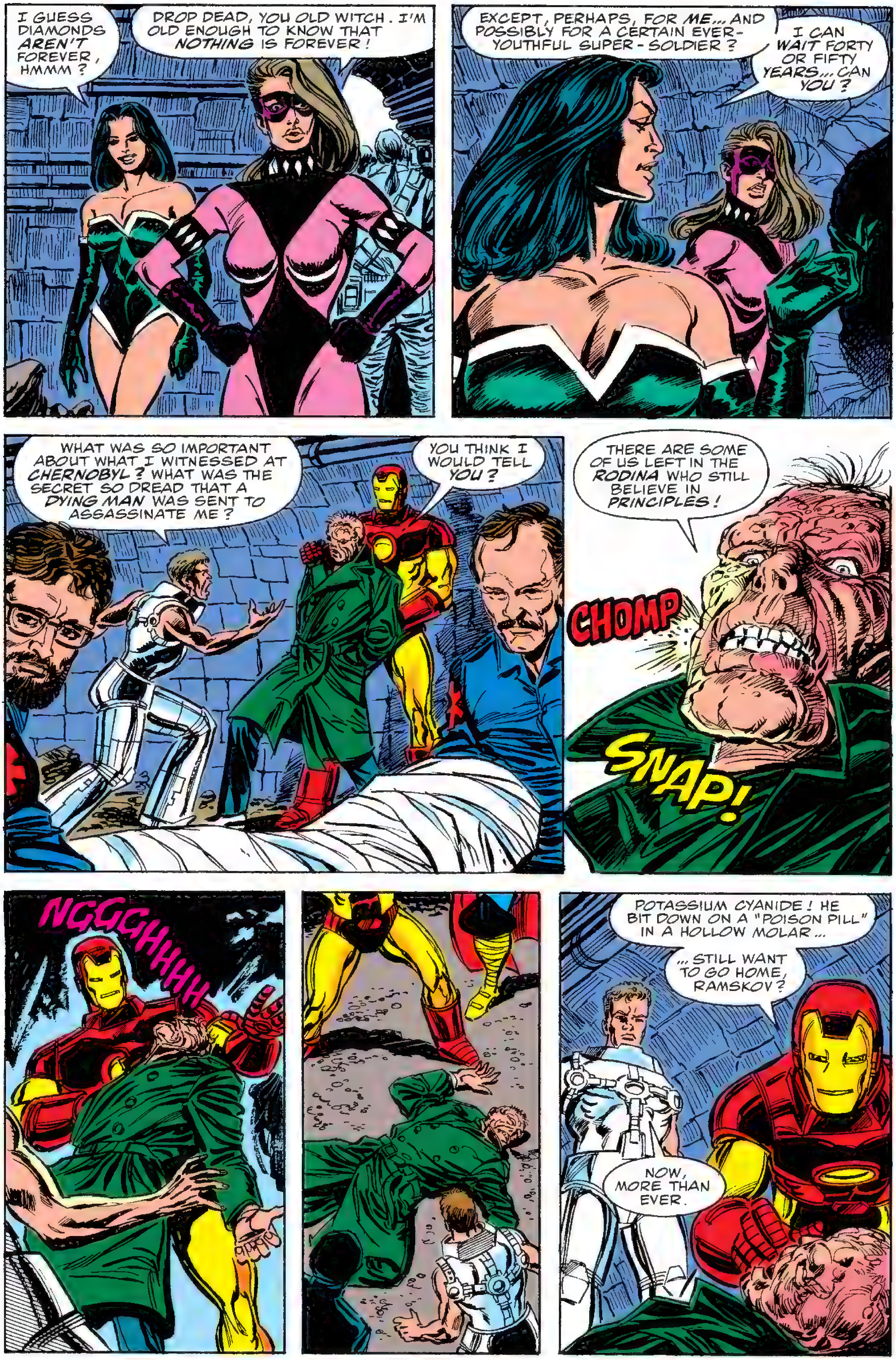

IS SHE--?
SHE'S *ALIVE*, SHE-HULK...
...BUT JUST *BARELY!* IF WE COULD GET HER TO A STATE-OF-THE-ART OPERATING ROOM IMMEDIATELY, MICRO-SURGERY COULD SAVE HER!
WE *OWE* IT TO HER TO DO EVERYTHING WE CAN!
THEN I PROPOSE A QUICK RETURN TO OUR OWN WORLD SINCE THE *AVENGERS'* BUSINESS IN THIS DIMENSION IS FINISHED, NOW THAT *LT. RAMSKOV* IS BACK TO HIS SENSES!
LT. RAMSKOV WILL REGAIN HIS STRANGE POWERS AS SOON AS WE RETURN, BUT NOW THAT HE IS NO LONGER BEING DRUGGED BY THE GRU, THAT WON'T BE A PROBLEM ANYMORE...
...HE'S JUST GOING TO HAVE TO LEARN TO *CONTROL* HIS POWERS AND USE THEM FOR THE COMMON *GOOD.*
I CERTAINLY *WILL*...
...AND FURTHERMORE, YOUR GRU BOSSES WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ME BETRAYING ANY OF THEIR NASTY *SECRETS*, ZHUKOVA! I AM, AFTER ALL, A *LOYAL SOLDIER*.
I WISH I COULD MAKE THEM BELIEVE YOU, LT. RAMSKOV!
RAMSKOV, MAYBE YOU AND I SHOULD *TEAM UP*...
...WE COULD BE THE *HEROES WHO EVERYBODY ELSE DOESN'T TRUST!*

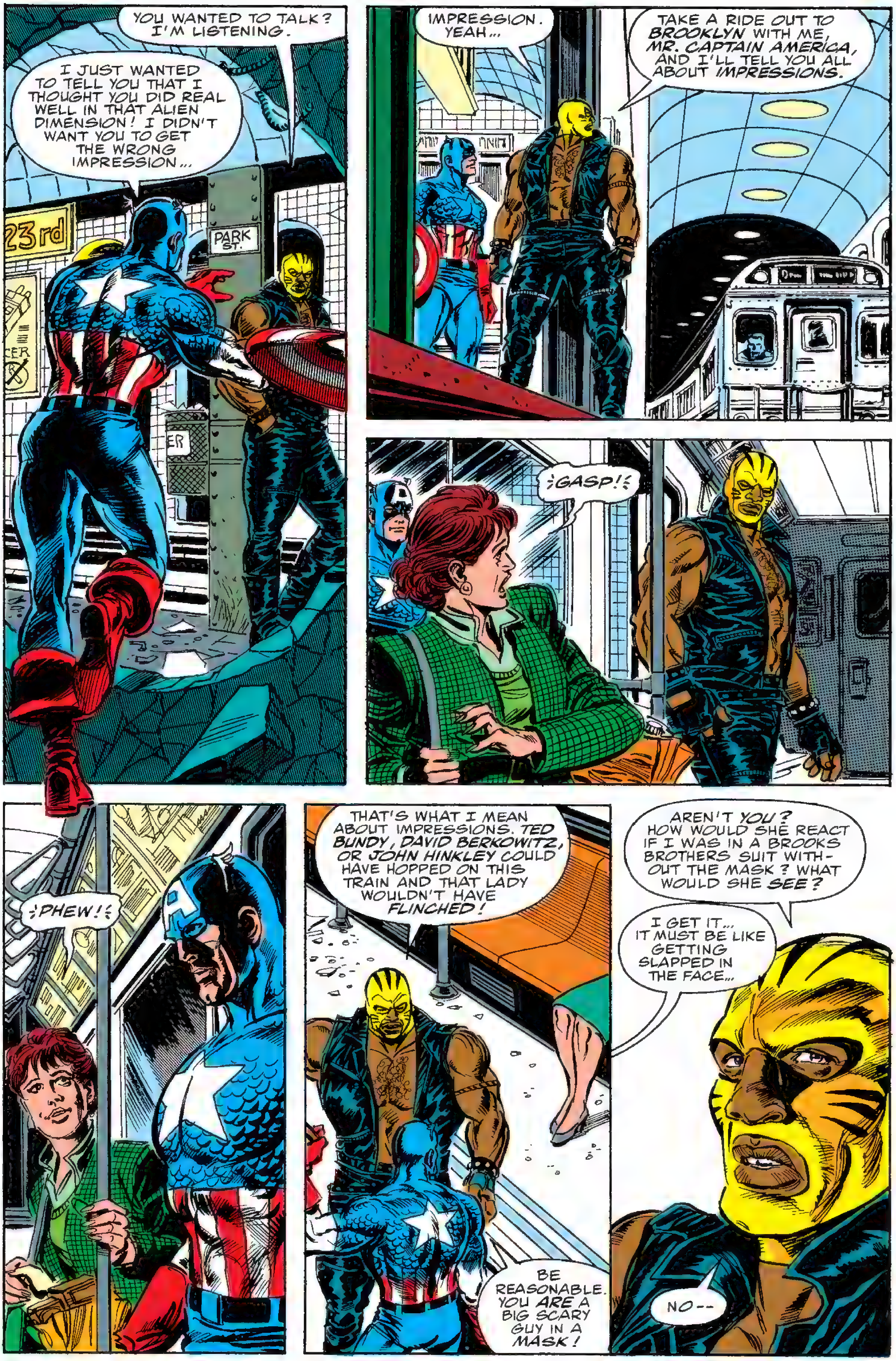

THEN WITHOUT FURTHER ADO...
...MIGHTY *MJOLNIR* DOTH REND THE VERY FABRIC OF TIME AND SPACE!
WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM *SERSI!*
IT'S *TRUE!* THE INTRUDERS HAVE THE POWER TO *LEAVE* THIS DIMENSION!
AVERT YOUR *EYES!* WE ARE NOT *MEANT* TO SEE THE AWFUL LIGHT THAT STREAMS BETWEEN REALITIES!
IT *BURNS!*
GONE! THEY HAVE SHIFTED TO ANOTHER *PLANE!*
AND TAKEN OUR LITTLE *XA* WITH THEM!
BUT WHAT IF THEY DON'T *HEAL* HER? AND EVEN IF THEY SAVE HER, WHAT'S TO STOP HER FROM *REALLY* BETRAYING US?
THE SO-CALLED *AVENGERS* THINK OF THEMSELVES AS *CHAMPIONS* OF GOOD...
...THEY WILL SEE TO XA'S RECOVERY! AS TO HER *LOYALTY* TO ME--
--LET US SIMPLY SAY, THAT I HAVE MADE *PROVISIONS!*

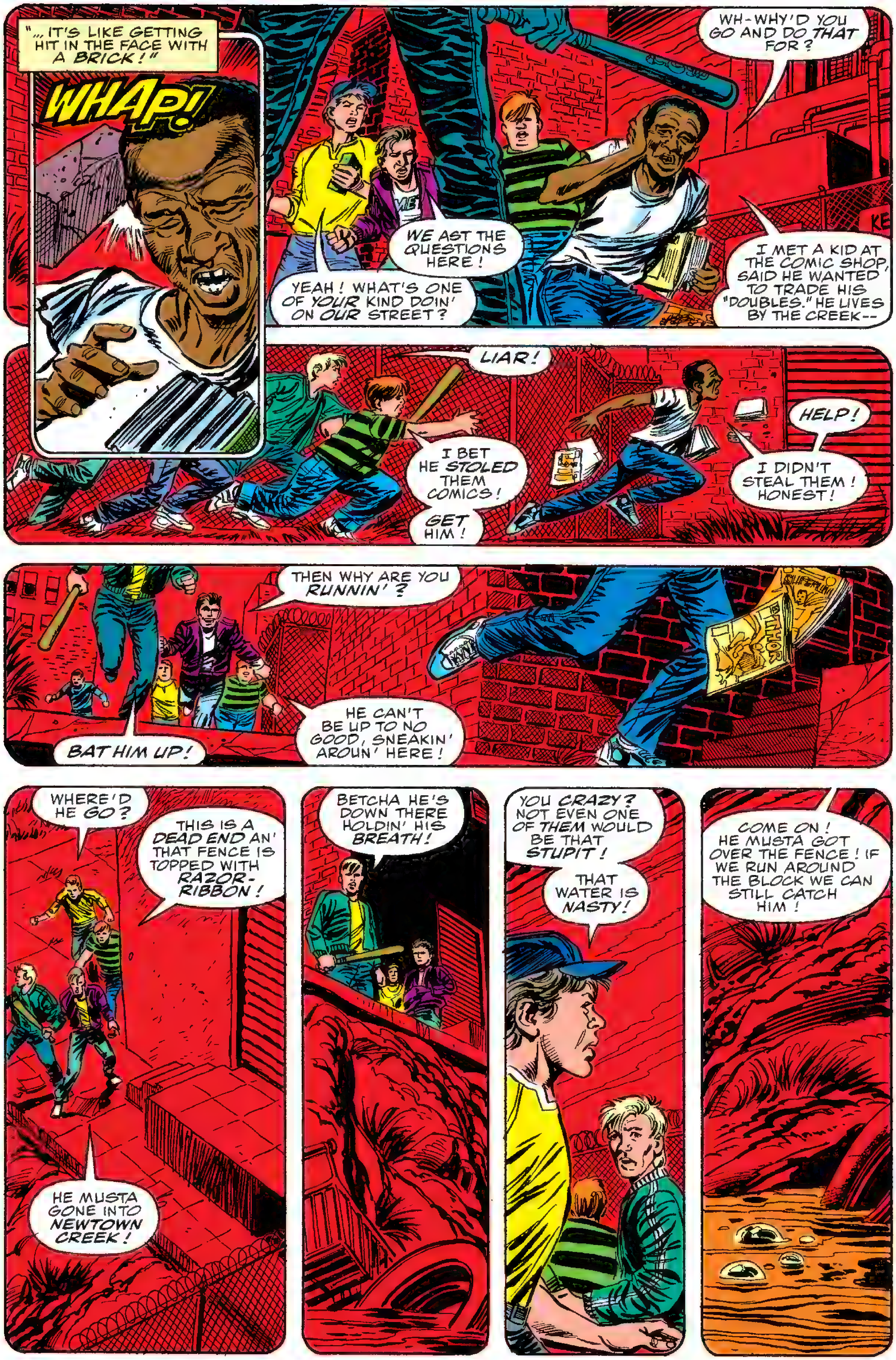

IN ANOTHER REALITY...
...THIS IS FANNY FONG REPORTING LIVE FROM A UTILITY CONDUIT TUNNEL, DEEP BELOW THE STREETS OF MIDTOWN MANHATTAN. IT WAS HERE THAT THE AVENGERS MYSTERIOUSLY DISAPPEARED...
...WHILE TRYING TO CONTAIN THE OUT-OF-CONTROL LT. RAMSKOV--
AF 8
WPIX
POLICE
--WHO MAY OR MAY NOT HAVE ACQUIRED HIS STARTLING POWERS AT CHERNOBYL DURING--
YOW! THAT FLASH WAS SO BRIGHT IT BOOMED OUT THE CAMERA! CONTINUE WITH AUDIO, FANNY!
WPIX
POLICE
LATE BREAKING DEVELOPMENT...!
...WE HAVE JUST WITNESSED A BRILLIANT FLASH OF LIGHT AND FELT AN ENERGY PULSE OF ASTOUNDING MAGNITUDE! COULD IT BE? HAVE THE AVENGERS CROSSED SOME COSMIC BARRIER BACK INTO OUR PRESENCE RIGHT HERE ON NATIONAL TELEVISION?
VERILY!
YOU TELL 'EM, THOR!
CAPTAIN AMERICA! ALL OF AMERICA WANTS TO KNOW WHAT WILL BECOME OF THE AVENGERS NOW THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAS REVOKED ITS CHARTER! MAY WE PLEASE HAVE AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT?
WHAT ABOUT LT. RAMSKOV?
NE / POLICE
THERE WILL BE A MEETING OF THE AVENGERS' GENERAL MEMBERSHIP TO DECIDE OUR COURSE OF ACTION AND ALL QUESTIONS WILL BE ANSWERED AFTER THAT MEETING!
TNN
CNN
AS FOR LT. RAMSKOV, HE IS PERFECTLY CAPABLE OF SPEAKING FOR HIMSELF--

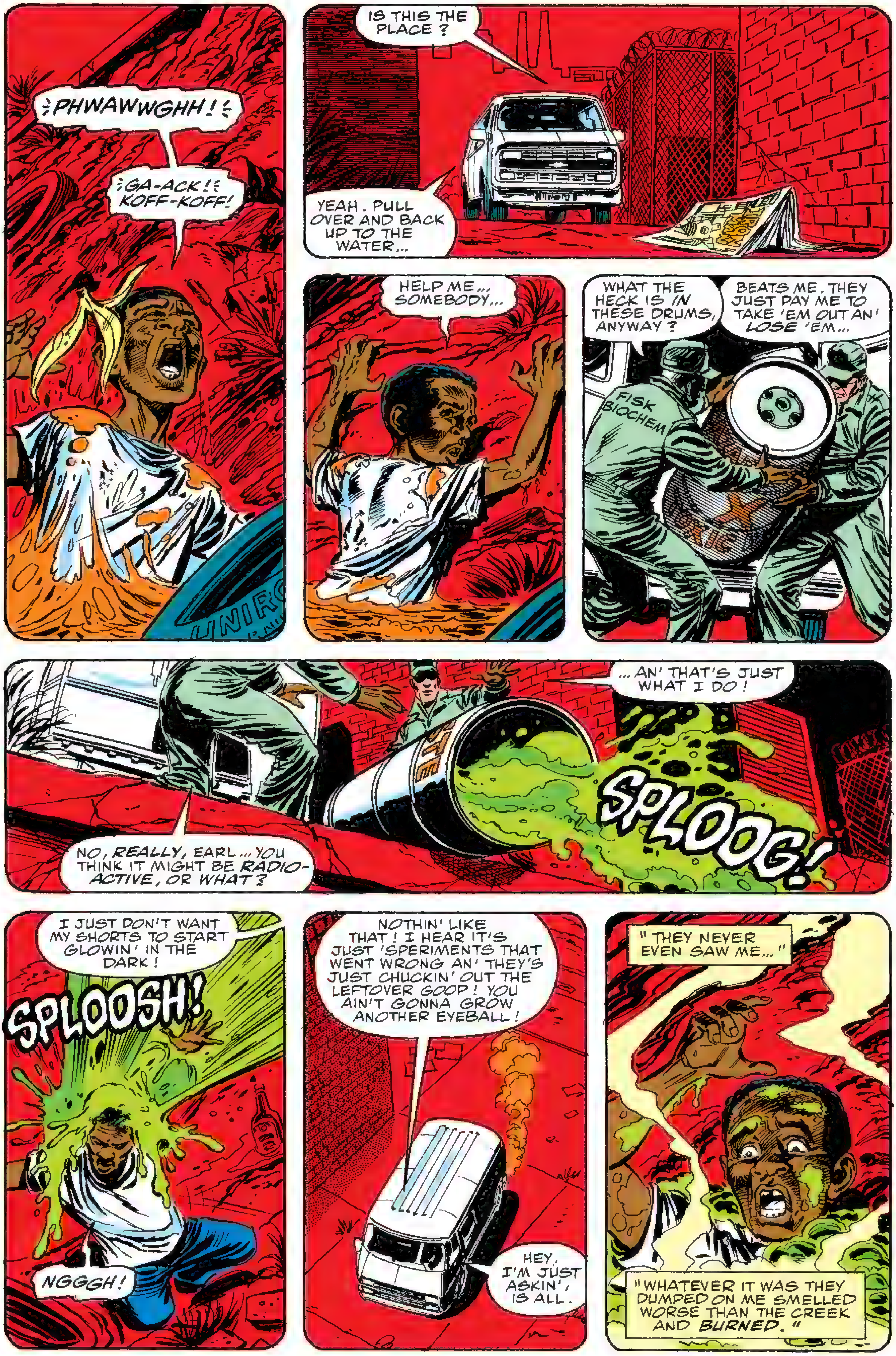

HEY! QUIT SHOVING!
WHERE'S YOUR PRESS CARD?
DIE, RAMSKOV, YOU TURNCOAT!
HE'S GOT A GUN!
BLAMM!
ZHUKOVA!
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, MISTER!
STRANGE... HOW IT WORKS OUT, EH? IT WAS M-MY ASSIGNMENT TO KILL YOU IF I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO R-REVEAL WHAT REALLY HAPPENED AT CHERNOBYL...
...YOU ARE A GOOD PERSON, ILLARION PAVLOVICH. I COULDN'T...
SHE WAS A TRAITOR AS WELL! DEATH IS TOO GOOD FOR HER!
THAT VOICE!
I KNOW YOU!!
I'VE HEARD THAT VOICE OVER AND OVER IN MY NIGHTMARES!
YOU WERE ONE OF THE MEN IN THE LEAD SUITS AT CHERNOBYL!
A LOT OF GOOD THAT SUIT DID ME! BUT I ACCEPTED MY FATE!
YOU LOOK HEALTHY TO ME, RAMSKOV! DID YOU SELL YOUR RUSSIAN SOUL FOR A FEW MORE YEARS OF LIFE IN THE WEST?
I DID NO SUCH THING!
IF ONLY I COULD BELIEVE YOU!

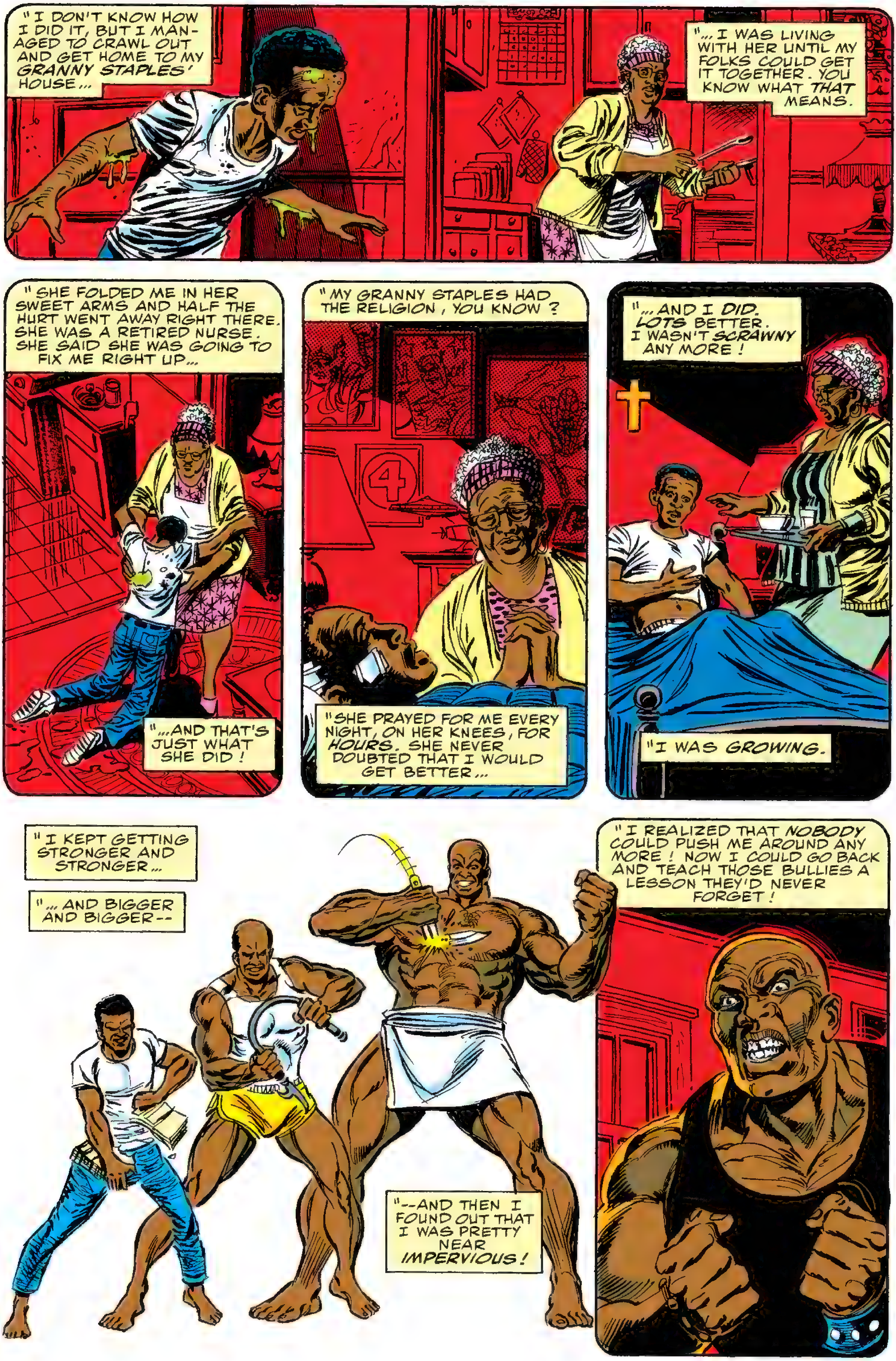

HEY THERE, GOOD LOOKIN'!
YOU! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
AWW, AREN'T YOU GLAD TO SEE ME? I HEARD ABOUT THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE AVENGERS ON THE NEWS, AND I WAS WORRIED!
OF COURSE I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU... YOU SHOULD JUST HAVE A LITTLE MORE FAITH IN THE ABILITY OF THE AVENGERS TO TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES!
SERSI, I'M GOING TO SEE THAT DR. ESTIVEZ GETS XA TO THE HOSPITAL, AND--
--ARE YOU LISTENING, OR WHAT?
YES. I CERTAINLY AM LISTENING. TO EVERY WORD.
REALLY? HOW GLAD ARE YOU, CAP?
WELL... YOU KNOW...
TELL ME.
DIAMOND, THERE ARE REPORTERS HERE...
SO WHAT? COME ON, CAP... YOU WERE SAYING--
RAGE
RAGE! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
NOTHING FOR ME HERE...
WAIT! WE HAVE TO TALK!
EXCUSE ME, DIAMOND... THIS IS OFFICIAL AVENGERS BUSINESS!

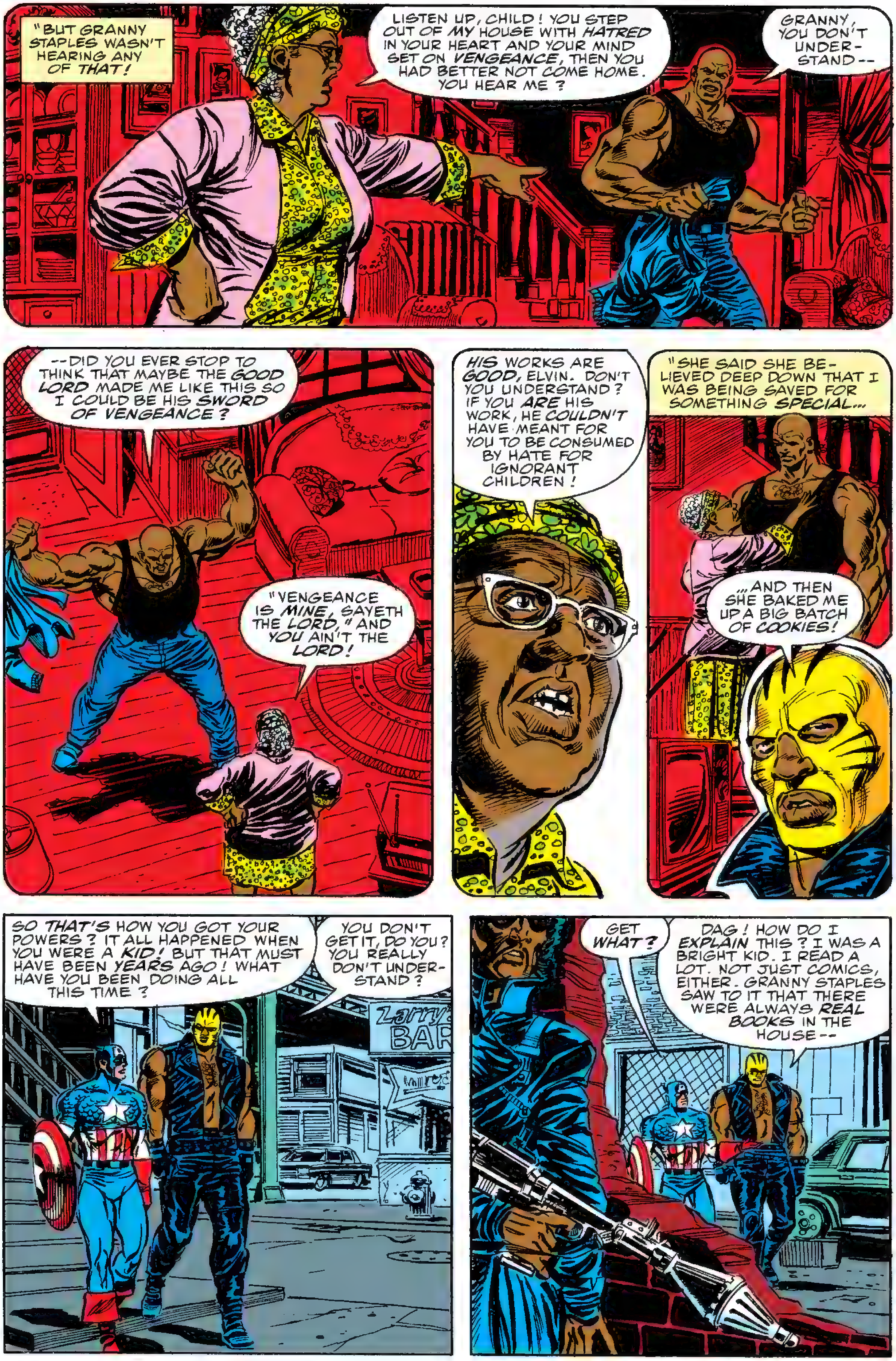

I GUESS DIAMONDS *AREN'T* FOREVER, HMMM?
DROP DEAD, YOU OLD WITCH. I'M OLD ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT *NOTHING* IS FOREVER!
EXCEPT, PERHAPS, FOR *ME*... AND POSSIBLY FOR A CERTAIN EVER-YOUTHFUL SUPER-SOLDIER?
I CAN *WAIT* FORTY OR FIFTY YEARS... CAN *YOU*?
WHAT WAS SO IMPORTANT ABOUT WHAT I WITNESSED AT *CHERNOBYL*? WHAT WAS THE SECRET SO DREAD THAT A *DYING MAN* WAS SENT TO ASSASSINATE ME?
YOU THINK I WOULD TELL *YOU*?
THERE ARE SOME OF US LEFT IN THE *RODINA* WHO STILL BELIEVE IN *PRINCIPLES*!
CHOMP
SNAP!
NGGGHHHHH
POTASSIUM CYANIDE! HE BIT DOWN ON A "POISON PILL" IN A HOLLOW MOLAR...
...STILL WANT TO GO HOME, RAMSKOV?
NOW, MORE THAN EVER.

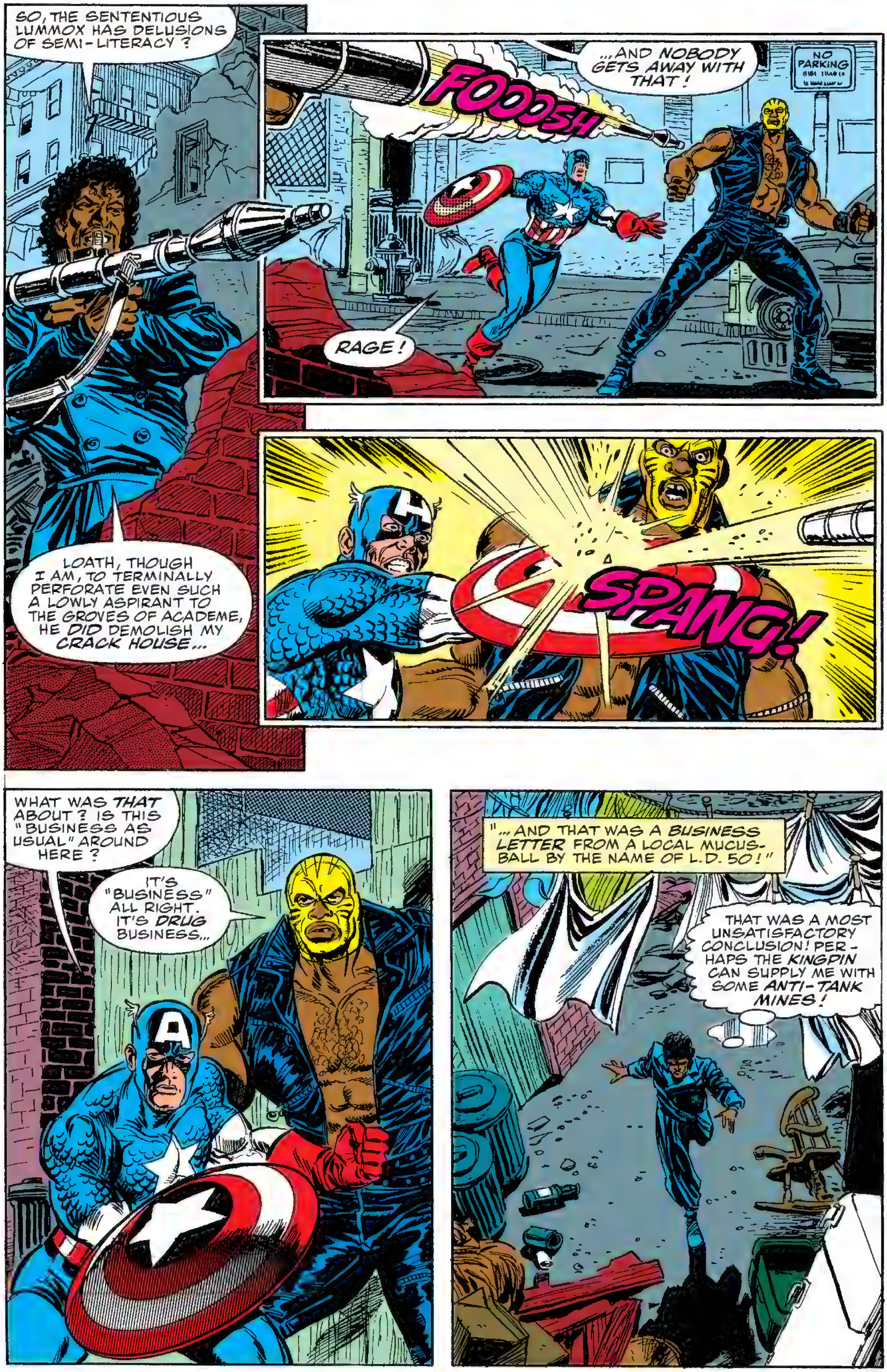

YOU WANTED TO TALK? I'M LISTENING.
I JUST WANTED TO TELL YOU THAT I THOUGHT YOU DID REAL WELL IN THAT ALIEN DIMENSION! I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO GET THE WRONG IMPRESSION...
23rd
PARK ST.
IMPRESSION. YEAH...
TAKE A RIDE OUT TO BROOKLYN WITH ME, MR. CAPTAIN AMERICA, AND I'LL TELL YOU ALL ABOUT IMPRESSIONS.
GASP!
PHEW!
THAT'S WHAT I MEAN ABOUT IMPRESSIONS. TED BUNDY, DAVID BERKOWITZ, OR JOHN HINKLEY COULD HAVE HOPPED ON THIS TRAIN AND THAT LADY WOULDN'T HAVE FLINCHED!
BE REASONABLE. YOU ARE A BIG SCARY GUY IN A MASK!
AREN'T YOU? HOW WOULD SHE REACT IF I WAS IN A BROOKS BROTHERS SUIT WITHOUT THE MASK? WHAT WOULD SHE SEE?
I GET IT... IT MUST BE LIKE GETTING SLAPPED IN THE FACE...
NO--

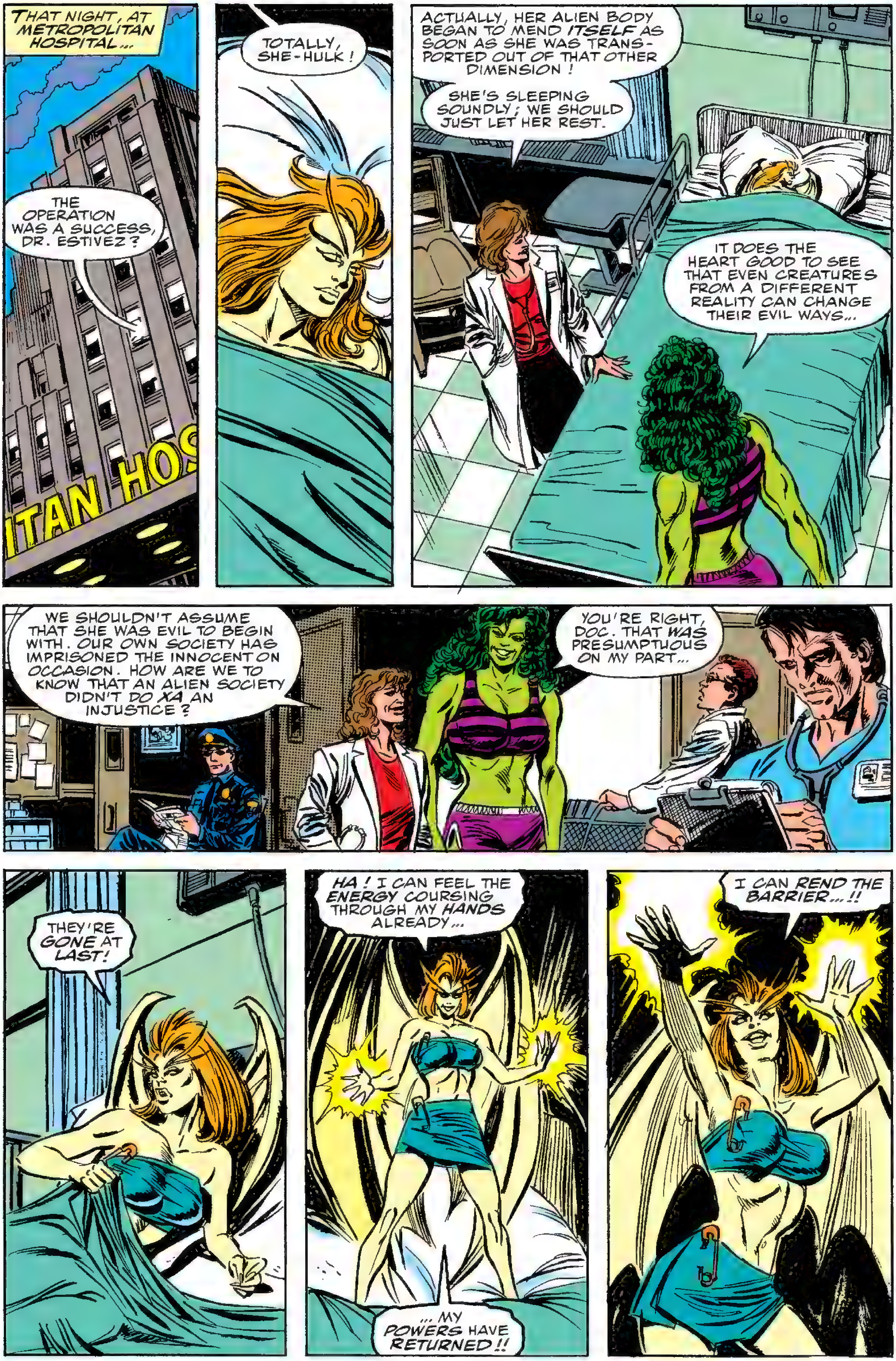

"... IT'S LIKE GETTING HIT IN THE FACE WITH A BRICK!"
WHAP!
WH-WHY'D YOU GO AND DO THAT FOR?
WE AST THE QUESTIONS HERE!
YEAH! WHAT'S ONE OF YOUR KIND DOIN' ON OUR STREET?
I MET A KID AT THE COMIC SHOP, SAID HE WANTED TO TRADE HIS "DOUBLES." HE LIVES BY THE CREEK--
LIAR!
I BET HE STOLED THEM COMICS!
GET HIM!
HELP!
I DIDN'T STEAL THEM! HONEST!
THEN WHY ARE YOU RUNNIN'?
BAT HIM UP!
HE CAN'T BE UP TO NO GOOD, SNEAKIN' AROUN' HERE!
WHERE'D HE GO?
THIS IS A DEAD END AN' THAT FENCE IS TOPPED WITH RAZOR-RIBBON!
HE MUSTA GONE INTO NEWTOWN CREEK!
BETCHA HE'S DOWN THERE HOLDIN' HIS BREATH!
YOU CRAZY? NOT EVEN ONE OF THEM WOULD BE THAT STUPIT!
THAT WATER IS NASTY!
COME ON! HE MUSTA GOT OVER THE FENCE! IF WE RUN AROUND THE BLOCK WE CAN STILL CATCH HIM!


PHWAWWGHH!
GA-ACK! KOFF-KOFF!
UNIRO
IS THIS THE PLACE?
YEAH. PULL OVER AND BACK UP TO THE WATER...
HELP ME... SOMEBODY...
WHAT THE HECK IS *IN* THESE DRUMS, ANYWAY?
BEATS ME. THEY JUST PAY ME TO TAKE 'EM OUT AN' *LOSE* 'EM...
FISK BIOCHEM
TOXIC
...AN' THAT'S JUST WHAT I DO!
SPLOOG!
NO, *REALLY*, EARL... YOU THINK IT MIGHT BE *RADIOACTIVE*, OR *WHAT?*
I JUST DON'T WANT MY SHORTS TO START GLOWIN' IN THE DARK!
SPLOOSH!
NGGGH!
NOTHIN' LIKE THAT! I HEAR IT'S JUST 'SPERIMENTS THAT WENT WRONG AN' THEY'S JUST CHUCKIN' OUT THE LEFTOVER GOOP! YOU AIN'T GONNA GROW ANOTHER EYEBALL!
HEY, I'M JUST ASKIN', IS ALL.
"THEY NEVER EVEN SAW ME..."
"WHATEVER IT WAS THEY DUMPED ON ME SMELLED WORSE THAN THE CREEK AND *BURNED.*"


"I DON'T KNOW HOW I DID IT, BUT I MANAGED TO CRAWL OUT AND GET HOME TO MY *GRANNY STAPLES'* HOUSE...
"... I WAS LIVING WITH HER UNTIL MY FOLKS COULD GET IT TOGETHER. YOU KNOW WHAT *THAT* MEANS.
"SHE FOLDED ME IN HER SWEET ARMS AND HALF THE HURT WENT AWAY RIGHT THERE. SHE WAS A RETIRED NURSE. SHE SAID SHE WAS GOING TO FIX ME RIGHT UP...
"...AND THAT'S JUST WHAT SHE DID!
"MY GRANNY STAPLES HAD THE RELIGION, YOU KNOW?
4
"SHE PRAYED FOR ME EVERY NIGHT, ON HER KNEES, FOR *HOURS*. SHE NEVER DOUBTED THAT I WOULD GET BETTER...
"... AND I *DID*. *LOTS* BETTER. I WASN'T *SCRAWNY* ANY MORE!
"I WAS *GROWING*.
"I KEPT GETTING STRONGER AND STRONGER...
"... AND BIGGER AND BIGGER--
"--AND THEN I FOUND OUT THAT I WAS PRETTY NEAR *IMPERVIOUS*!
"I REALIZED THAT *NOBODY* COULD PUSH ME AROUND ANY MORE! NOW I COULD GO BACK AND TEACH THOSE BULLIES A LESSON THEY'D NEVER FORGET!


"BUT GRANNY STAPLES WASN'T HEARING ANY OF *THAT!*
LISTEN UP, CHILD! YOU STEP OUT OF *MY* HOUSE WITH *HATRED* IN YOUR HEART AND YOUR MIND SET ON *VENGEANCE*, THEN YOU HAD BETTER NOT COME HOME. YOU HEAR ME ?
GRANNY, YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND --
--DID YOU EVER STOP TO THINK THAT MAYBE THE *GOOD LORD* MADE ME LIKE THIS SO I COULD BE HIS *SWORD OF VENGEANCE* ?
"VENGEANCE IS *MINE*, SAYETH THE *LORD*," AND *YOU* AIN'T THE *LORD*!
HIS WORKS ARE *GOOD*, ELVIN. DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? IF YOU *ARE* HIS WORK, HE *COULDN'T* HAVE MEANT FOR YOU TO BE CONSUMED BY HATE FOR IGNORANT CHILDREN!
"SHE SAID SHE BELIEVED DEEP DOWN THAT I WAS BEING SAVED FOR SOMETHING *SPECIAL*...
...AND THEN SHE BAKED ME UP A BIG BATCH OF *COOKIES*!
SO *THAT'S* HOW YOU GOT YOUR POWERS? IT ALL HAPPENED WHEN YOU WERE A *KID*! BUT THAT MUST HAVE BEEN *YEARS* AGO! WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING ALL THIS TIME ?
YOU DON'T GET IT, DO YOU? YOU REALLY DON'T UNDERSTAND ?
Larry's BAR
GET *WHAT* ?
DAG! HOW DO I *EXPLAIN* THIS? I WAS A BRIGHT KID. I READ A LOT. NOT JUST COMICS, EITHER. GRANNY STAPLES SAW TO IT THAT THERE WERE ALWAYS *REAL BOOKS* IN THE HOUSE --


SO, THE SENTENTIOUS LUMMOX HAS DELUSIONS OF SEMI-LITERACY?
...AND NOBODY GETS AWAY WITH THAT!
FOOOSH
NO PARKING
RAGE!
LOATH, THOUGH I AM, TO TERMINALLY PERFORATE EVEN SUCH A LOWLY ASPIRANT TO THE GROVES OF ACADEME, HE *DID* DEMOLISH MY *CRACK HOUSE*...
SPANG!
WHAT WAS *THAT* ABOUT? IS THIS "BUSINESS AS USUAL" AROUND HERE?
IT'S "BUSINESS" ALL RIGHT. IT'S *DRUG* BUSINESS...
"...AND THAT WAS A *BUSINESS LETTER* FROM A LOCAL MUCUS-BALL BY THE NAME OF L.D. 50!"
THAT WAS A MOST UNSATISFACTORY CONCLUSION! PERHAPS THE *KINGPIN* CAN SUPPLY ME WITH SOME *ANTI-TANK MINES*!


THAT NIGHT, AT METROPOLITAN HOSPITAL...
THE OPERATION WAS A SUCCESS, DR. ESTIVEZ?
ITAN HOS
TOTALLY, SHE-HULK!
ACTUALLY, HER ALIEN BODY BEGAN TO MEND *ITSELF* AS SOON AS SHE WAS TRANSPORTED OUT OF THAT OTHER DIMENSION!
SHE'S SLEEPING SOUNDLY; WE SHOULD JUST LET HER REST.
IT DOES THE HEART GOOD TO SEE THAT EVEN CREATURES FROM A DIFFERENT REALITY CAN CHANGE THEIR EVIL WAYS...
WE SHOULDN'T ASSUME THAT SHE WAS EVIL TO BEGIN WITH. OUR OWN SOCIETY HAS IMPRISONED THE INNOCENT ON OCCASION. HOW ARE WE TO KNOW THAT AN ALIEN SOCIETY DIDN'T *DO XA* AN INJUSTICE?
YOU'RE RIGHT, DOC. THAT *WAS* PRESUMPTUOUS ON MY PART...
THEY'RE *GONE* AT *LAST!*
HA! I CAN FEEL THE *ENERGY COURSING* THROUGH MY *HANDS* ALREADY...
... MY *POWERS* HAVE *RETURNED!!*
I CAN *REND THE BARRIER...!!*

...TO LOOSE NGH AND HIS HORDE UPON THIS UNSUSPECTING WORLD!!
FREE AT LAST! FREE TO CONQUER...
...FREE TO REVEL IN EVILNESS FOR ITS OWN SAKE!!
DIXIE
Rx
NEXT ISSUE:
THE TETRARCHS OF ENTROPY!

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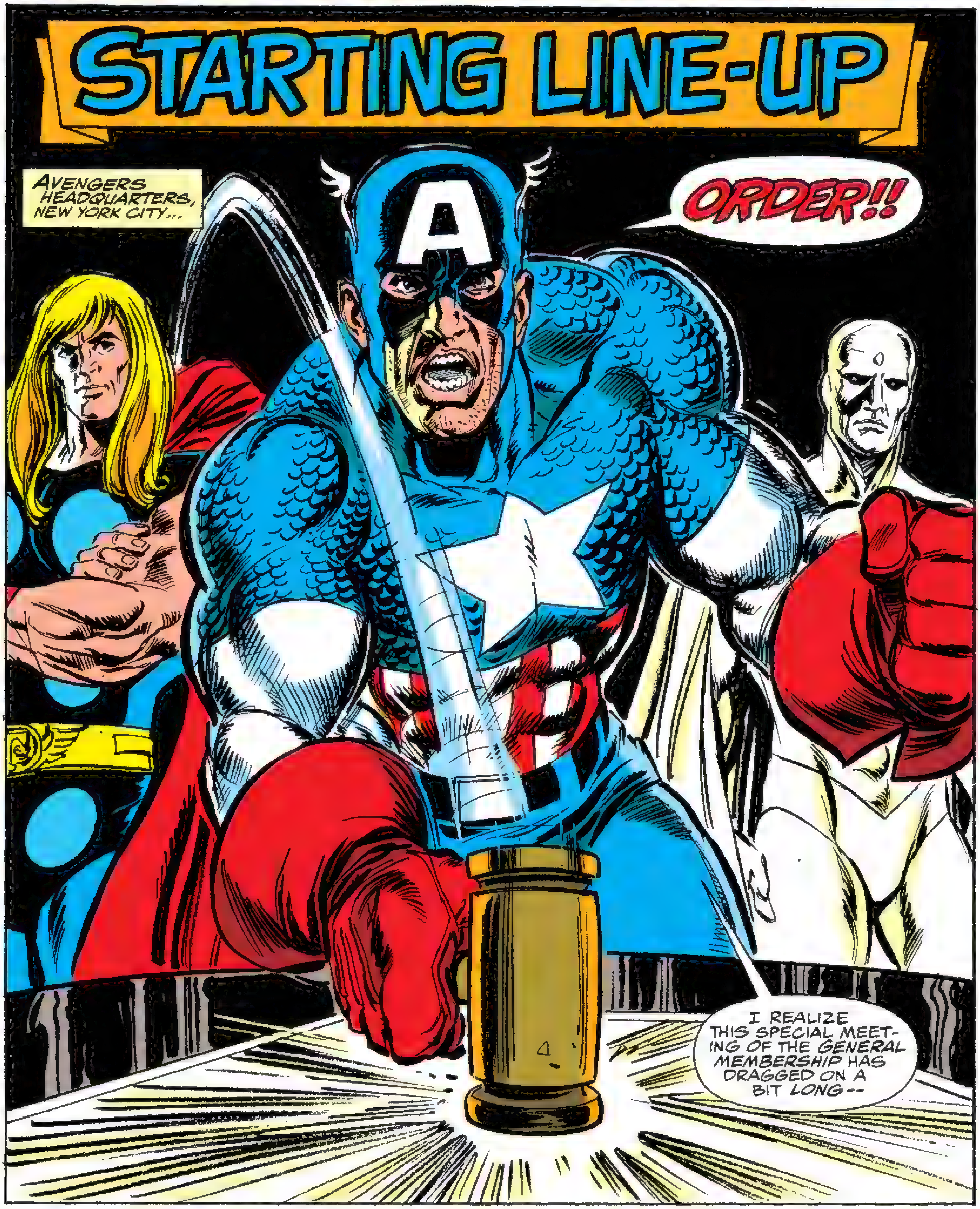
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THE TIME HAS COME TO ANNOUNCE--
--A NEW TEAM OF AVENGERS!
RYAN/PALMER

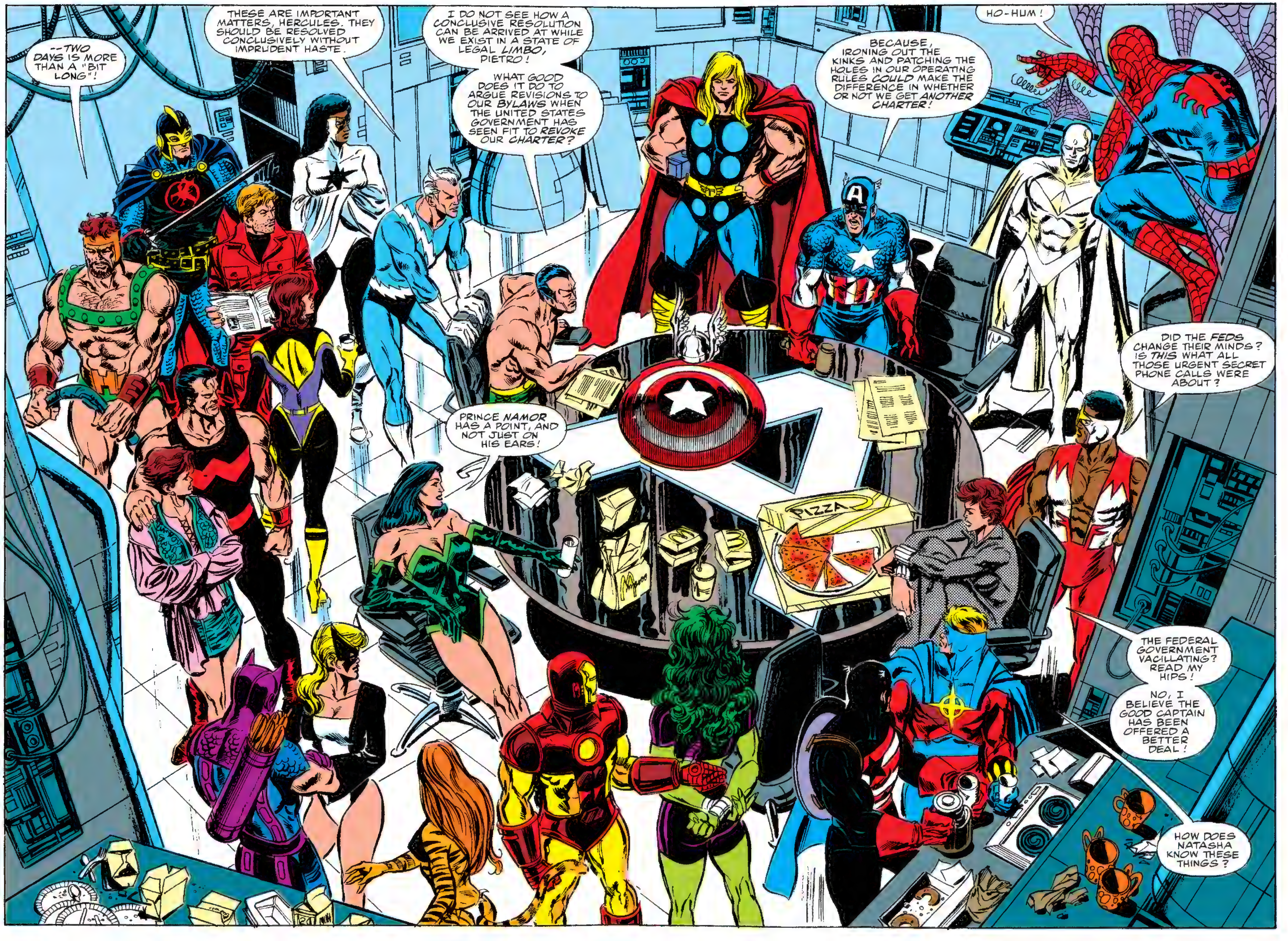
[redacted]

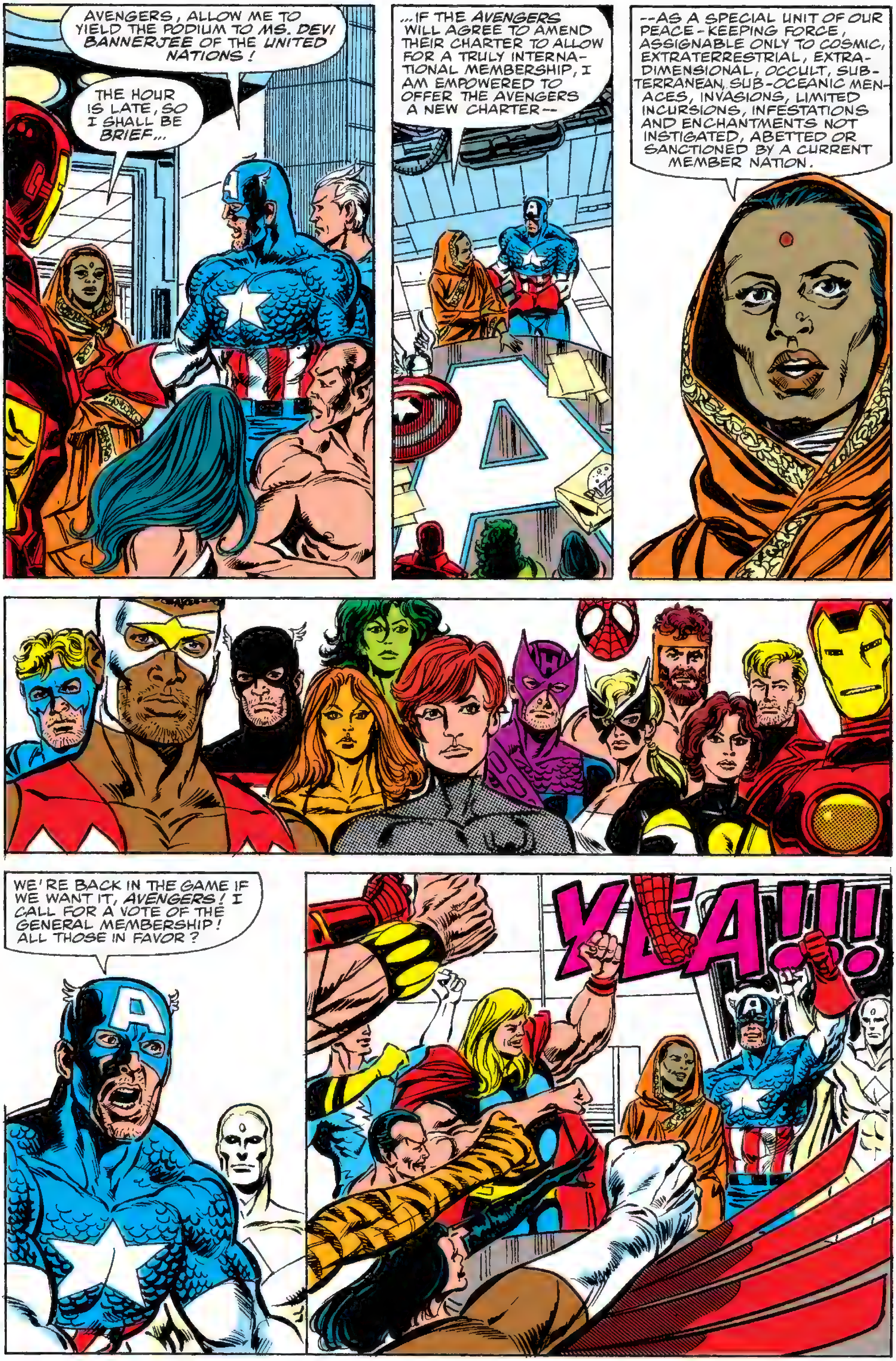
TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND!
STAN LEE PRESENTS . . . THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

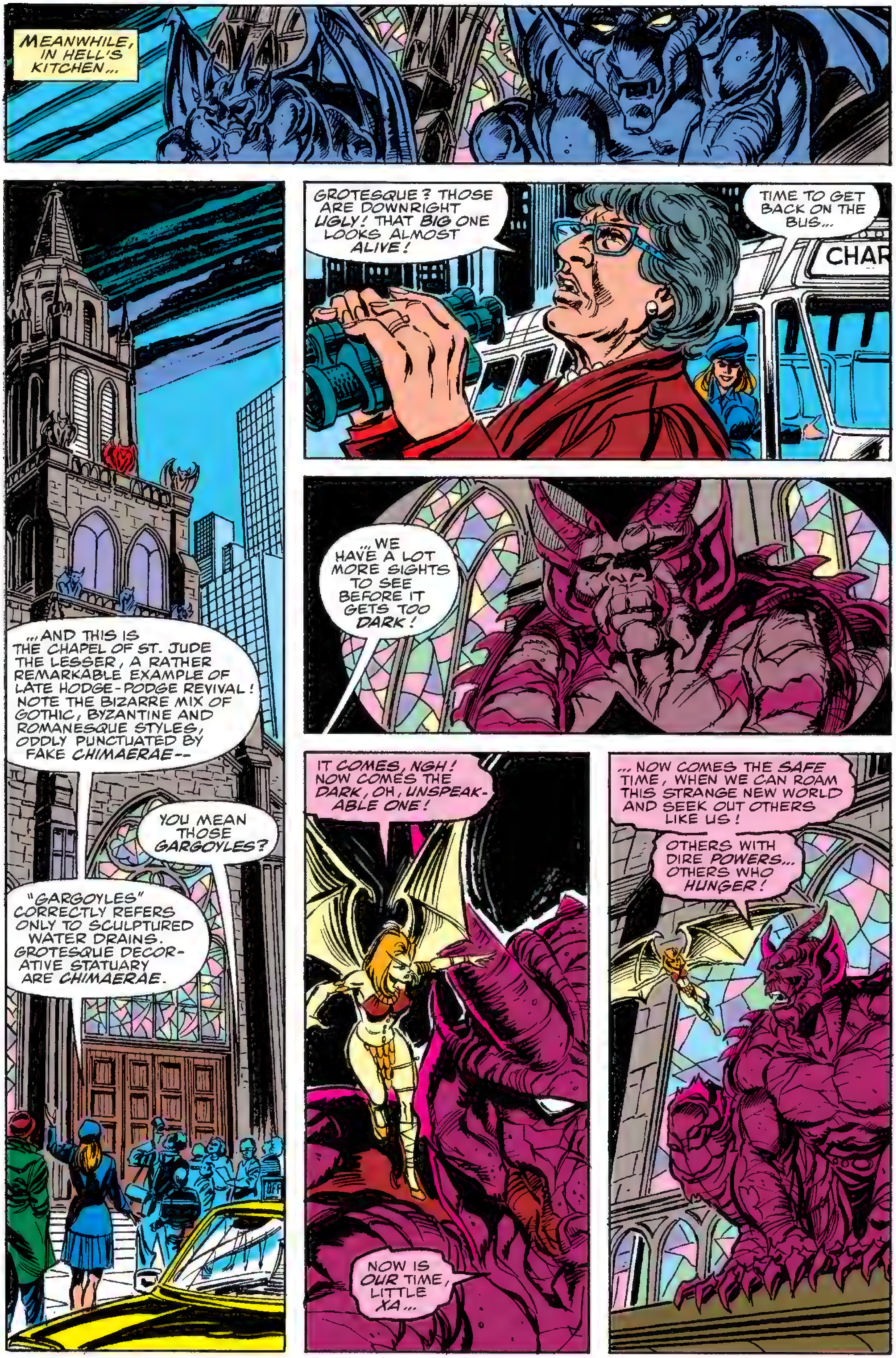
STARTING LINE-UP

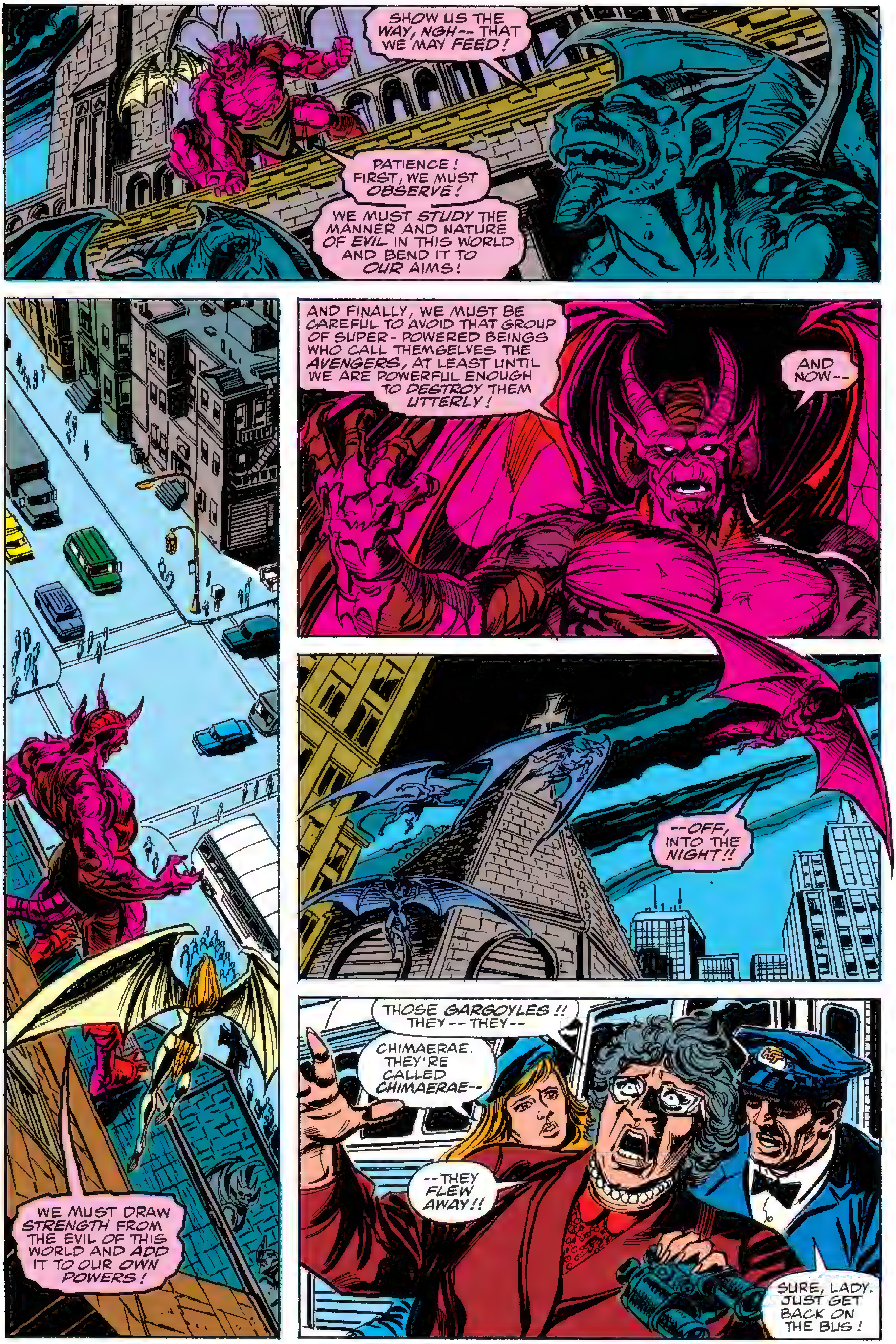

AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK CITY...
ORDER!!
I REALIZE THIS SPECIAL MEETING OF THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP HAS DRAGGED ON A BIT LONG--

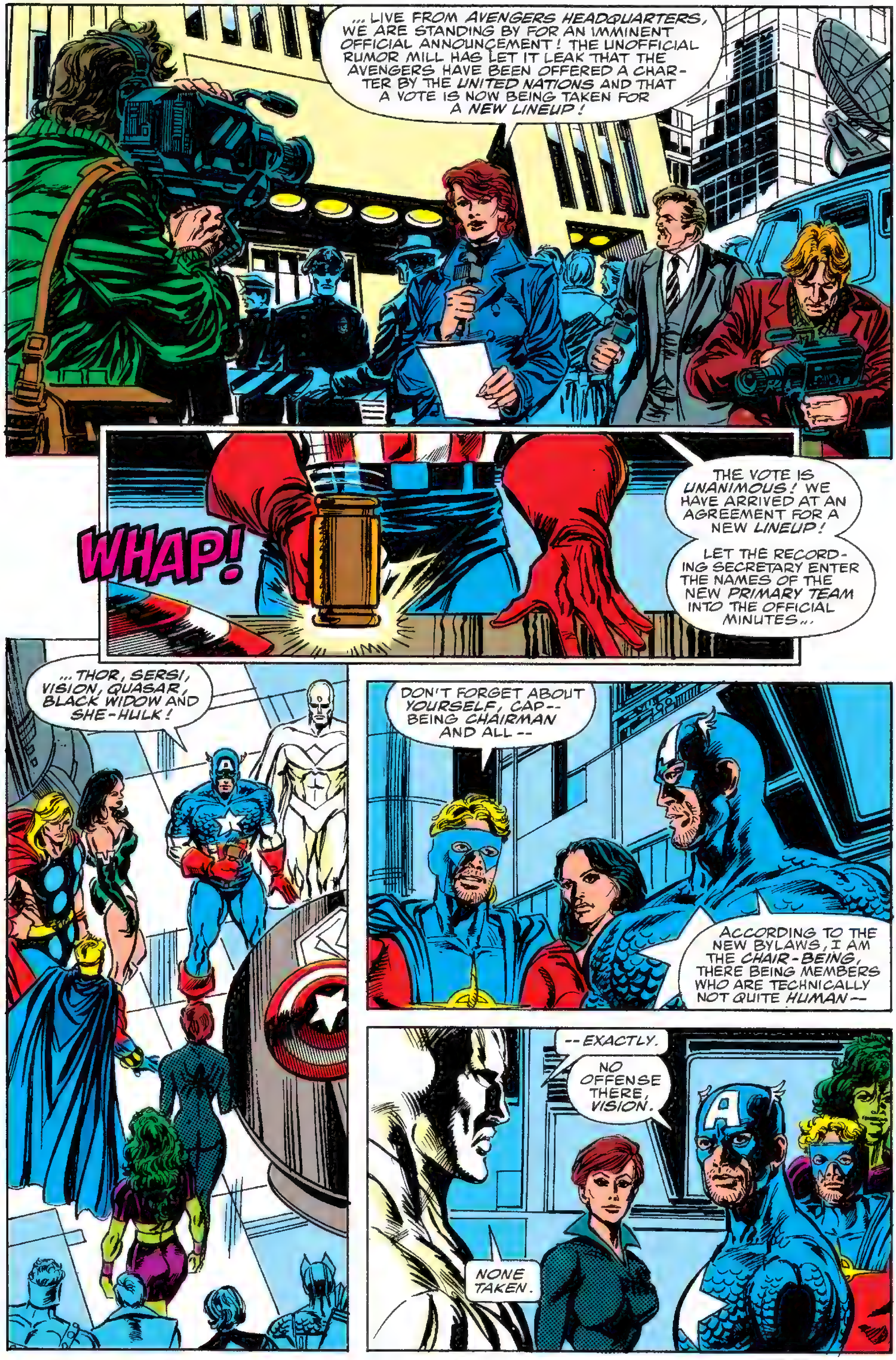
SCRIPT: LARRY HAMA * PENCILS: PAUL RYAN * FINISHES TOM PALMER * COLORING: CHRISTIE SCHEELE * LETTERING: BILL OAKLEY * EDITOR: HOWARD MACKIE * EDITOR IN CHIEF: TOM DeFALCO

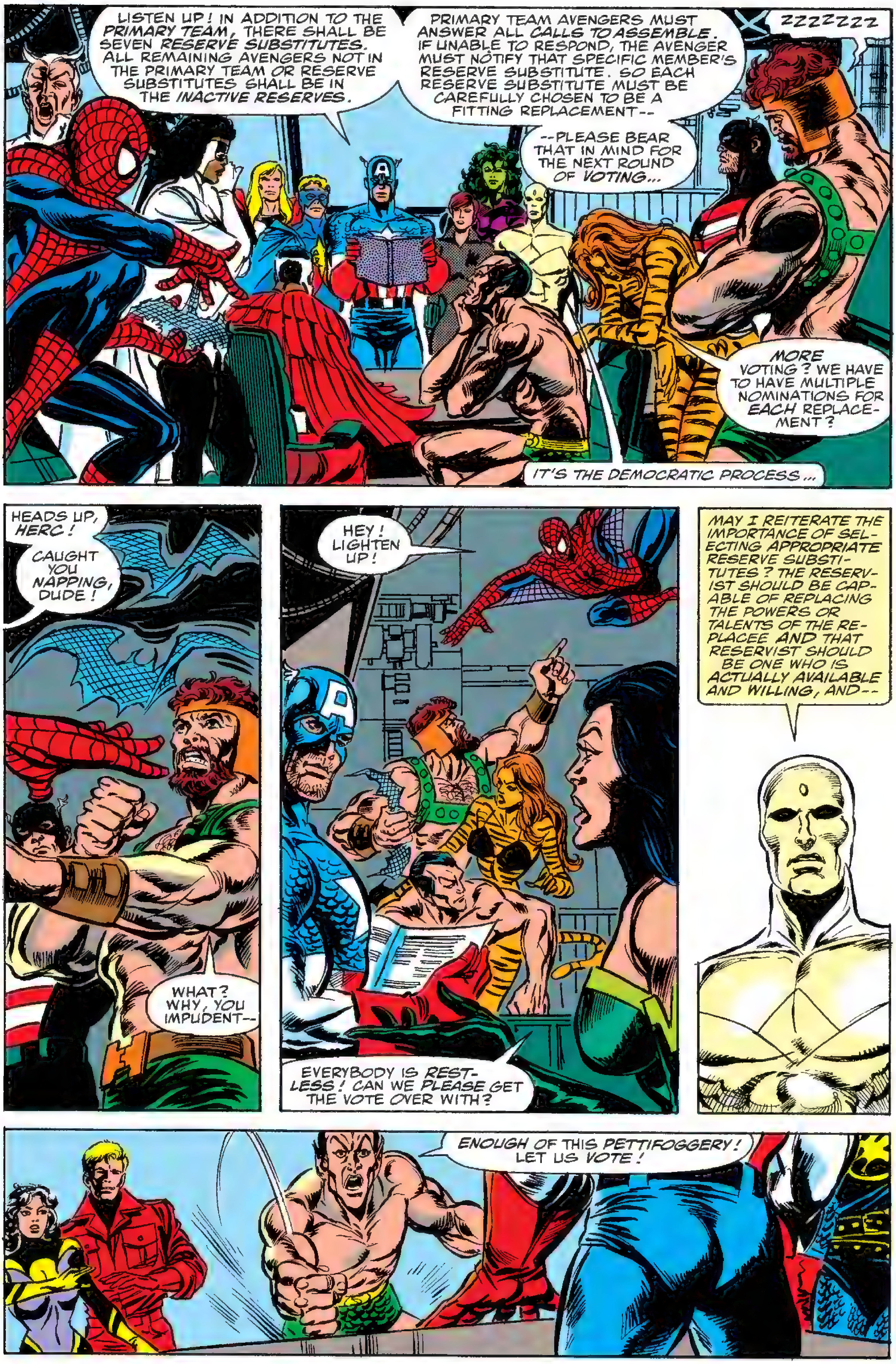

--TWO DAYS IS MORE THAN A "BIT LONG"!
THESE ARE IMPORTANT MATTERS, HERCULES. THEY SHOULD BE RESOLVED CONCLUSIVELY WITHOUT IMPRUDENT HASTE.
I DO NOT SEE HOW A CONCLUSIVE RESOLUTION CAN BE ARRIVED AT WHILE WE EXIST IN A STATE OF LEGAL *LIMBO*, PIETRO!
WHAT GOOD DOES IT DO TO ARGUE REVISIONS TO OUR *BYLAWS* WHEN THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAS SEEN FIT TO *REVOKE* OUR *CHARTER*?
BECAUSE, IRONING OUT THE KINKS AND PATCHING THE HOLES IN OUR OPERATING RULES *COULD* MAKE THE DIFFERENCE IN WHETHER OR NOT WE GET *ANOTHER CHARTER*!
HO-HUM!
DID THE *FEDS* CHANGE THEIR MINDS? IS *THIS* WHAT ALL THOSE URGENT SECRET PHONE CALLS WERE ABOUT?
PRINCE *NAMOR* HAS A POINT, AND NOT JUST ON HIS EARS!
PIZZA
THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT VACILLATING? READ MY HIPS!
NO, I BELIEVE THE GOOD CAPTAIN HAS BEEN OFFERED A BETTER DEAL!
HOW DOES NATASHA KNOW THESE THINGS?

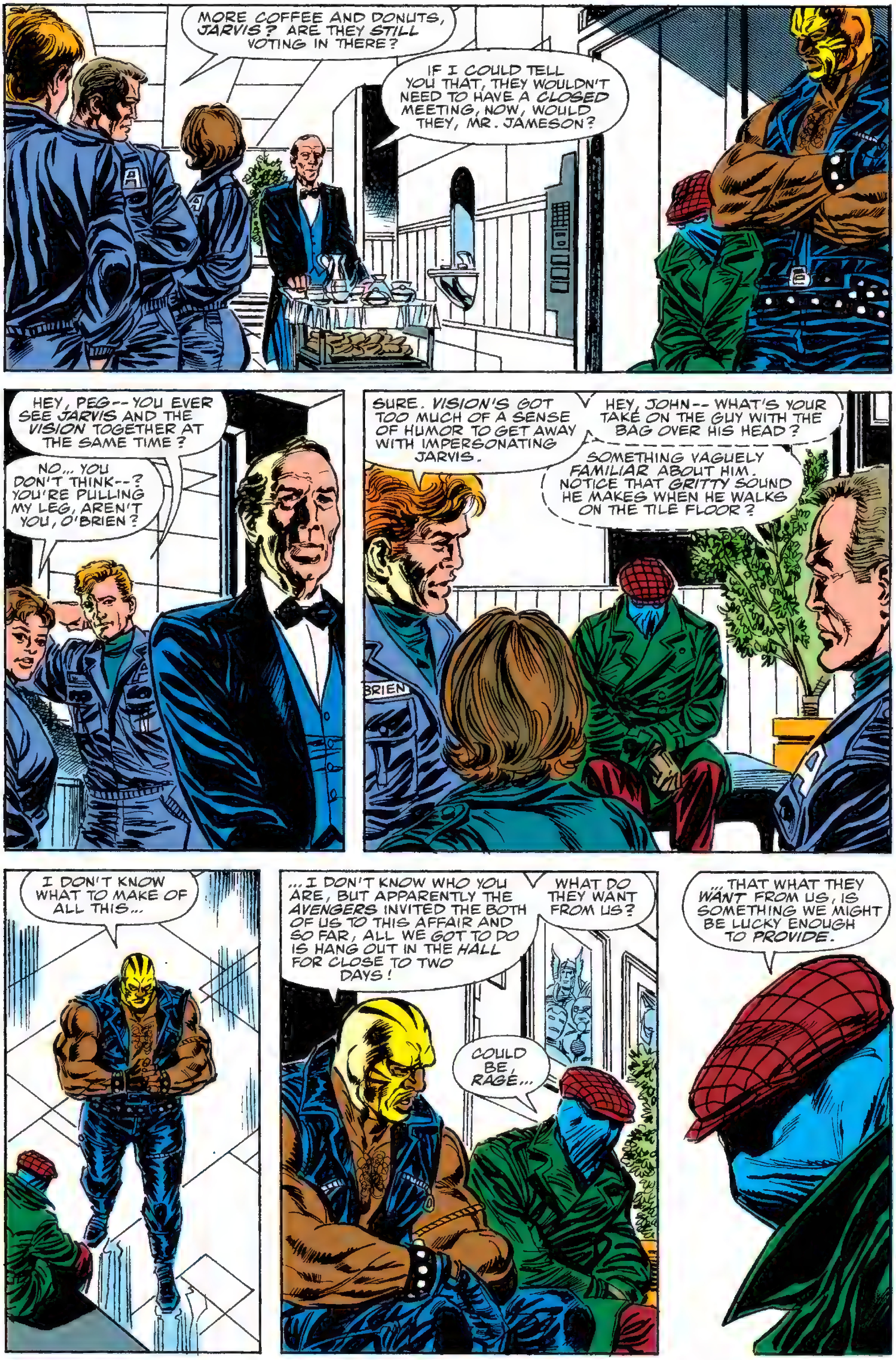

AVENGERS, ALLOW ME TO YIELD THE PODIUM TO *MS. DEVI BANNERJEE* OF THE *UNITED NATIONS!*
THE HOUR IS LATE, SO I SHALL BE *BRIEF...*
...IF THE *AVENGERS* WILL AGREE TO AMEND THEIR CHARTER TO ALLOW FOR A TRULY INTERNATIONAL MEMBERSHIP, I AM EMPOWERED TO OFFER THE AVENGERS A NEW CHARTER--
--AS A SPECIAL UNIT OF OUR PEACE-KEEPING FORCE, ASSIGNABLE ONLY TO COSMIC, EXTRATERRESTRIAL, EXTRA-DIMENSIONAL, OCCULT, SUBTERRANEAN, SUB-OCEANIC MENACES, INVASIONS, LIMITED INCURSIONS, INFESTATIONS AND ENCHANTMENTS NOT INSTIGATED, ABETTED OR SANCTIONED BY A CURRENT MEMBER NATION.
WE'RE BACK IN THE GAME IF WE WANT IT, *AVENGERS!* I CALL FOR A VOTE OF THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP! ALL THOSE IN FAVOR?
YEA!!!

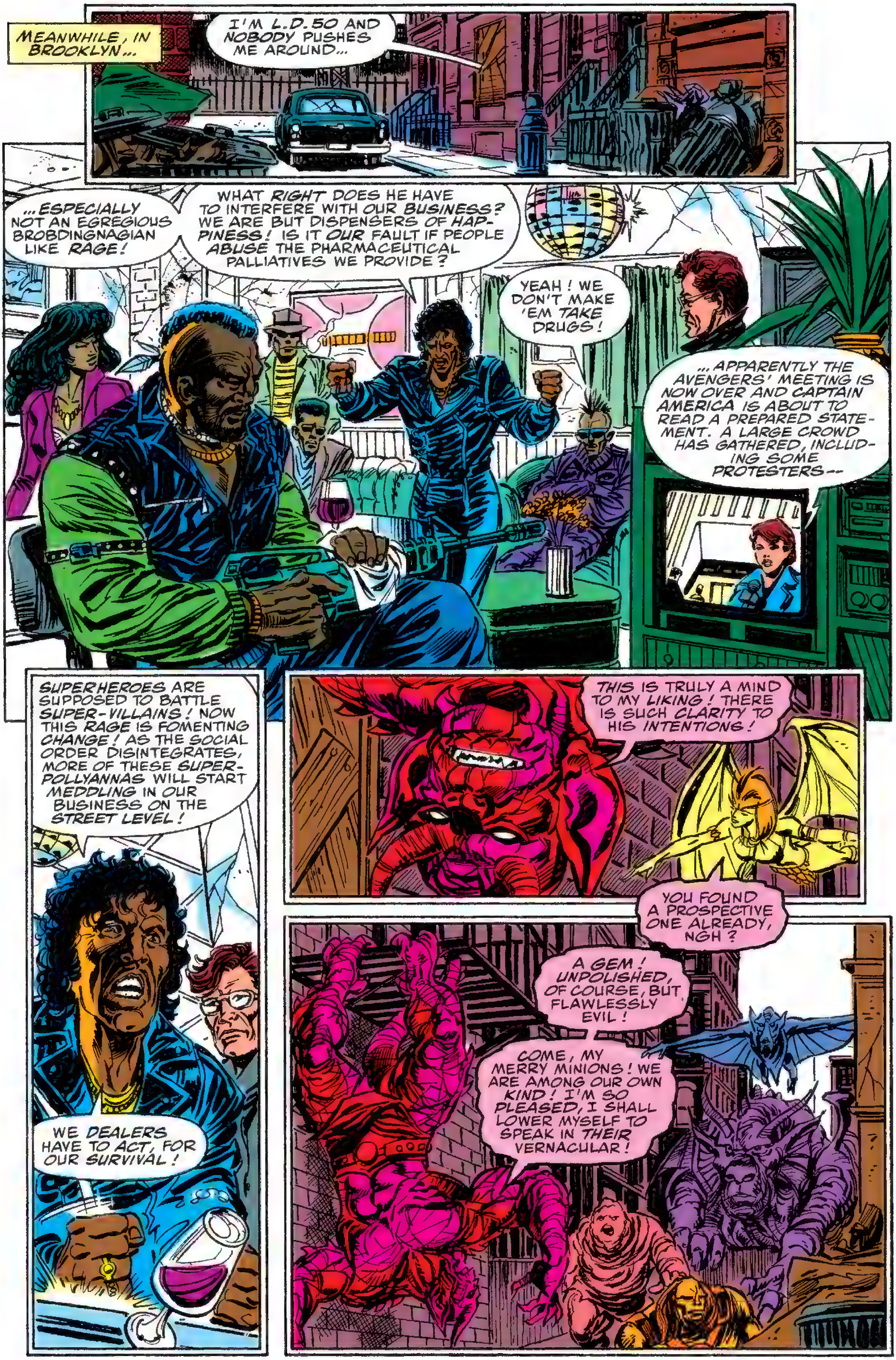

MEANWHILE, IN HELL'S KITCHEN...
...AND THIS IS THE CHAPEL OF ST. JUDE THE LESSER, A RATHER REMARKABLE EXAMPLE OF LATE HODGE-PODGE REVIVAL! NOTE THE BIZARRE MIX OF GOTHIC, BYZANTINE AND ROMANESQUE STYLES, ODDLY PUNCTUATED BY FAKE CHIMAERAE--
YOU MEAN THOSE GARGOYLES?
"GARGOYLES" CORRECTLY REFERS ONLY TO SCULPTURED WATER DRAINS. GROTESQUE DECORATIVE STATUARY ARE CHIMAERAE.
GROTESQUE? THOSE ARE DOWNRIGHT UGLY! THAT BIG ONE LOOKS ALMOST ALIVE!
TIME TO GET BACK ON THE BUS...
CHAR
...WE HAVE A LOT MORE SIGHTS TO SEE BEFORE IT GETS TOO DARK!
IT COMES, NGH! NOW COMES THE DARK, OH, UNSPEAKABLE ONE!
NOW IS OUR TIME, LITTLE XA...
...NOW COMES THE SAFE TIME, WHEN WE CAN ROAM THIS STRANGE NEW WORLD AND SEEK OUT OTHERS LIKE US!
OTHERS WITH DIRE POWERS... OTHERS WHO HUNGER!

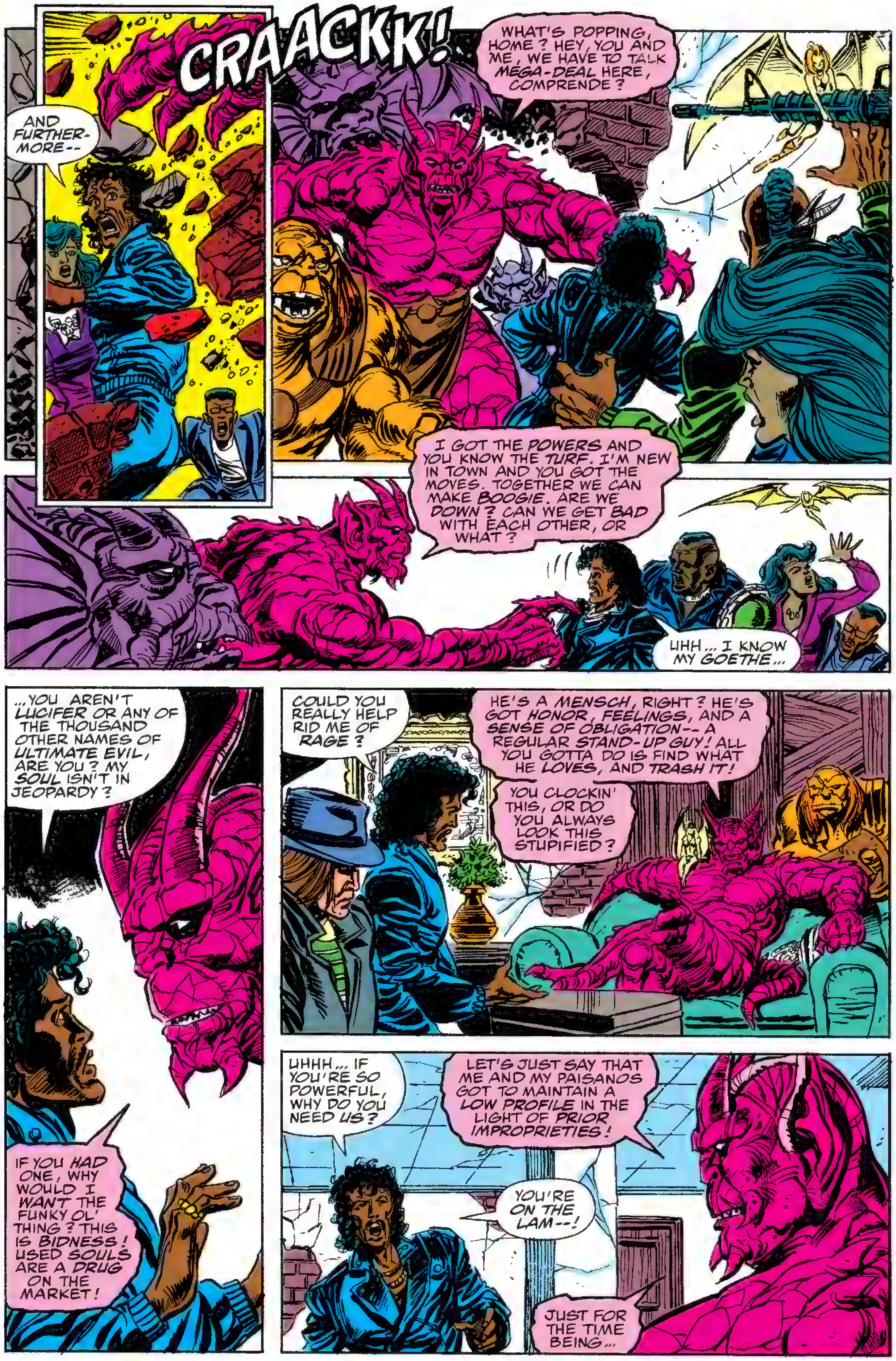

SHOW US THE WAY, NGH-- THAT WE MAY FEED!
PATIENCE! FIRST, WE MUST OBSERVE!
WE MUST STUDY THE MANNER AND NATURE OF EVIL IN THIS WORLD AND BEND IT TO OUR AIMS!
WE MUST DRAW STRENGTH FROM THE EVIL OF THIS WORLD AND ADD IT TO OUR OWN POWERS!
AND FINALLY, WE MUST BE CAREFUL TO AVOID THAT GROUP OF SUPER-POWERED BEINGS WHO CALL THEMSELVES THE AVENGERS, AT LEAST UNTIL WE ARE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO DESTROY THEM UTTERLY!
AND NOW--
--OFF, INTO THE NIGHT!!
THOSE GARGOYLES!! THEY -- THEY --
CHIMAERAE. THEY'RE CALLED CHIMAERAE--
--THEY FLEW AWAY!!
SURE, LADY. JUST GET BACK ON THE BUS!

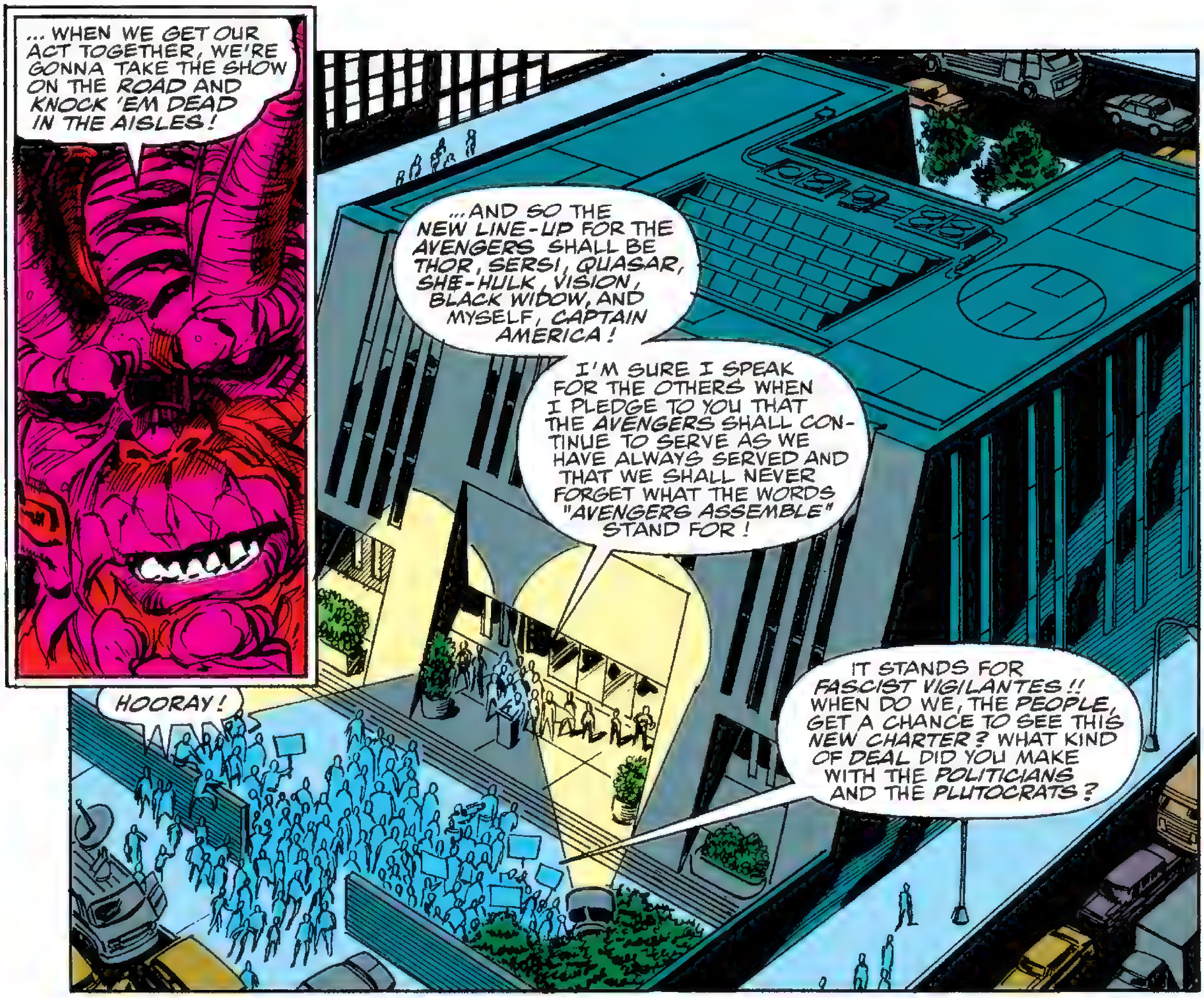

...LIVE FROM AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS, WE ARE STANDING BY FOR AN IMMINENT OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT! THE UNOFFICIAL RUMOR MILL HAS LET IT LEAK THAT THE AVENGERS HAVE BEEN OFFERED A CHARTER BY THE UNITED NATIONS AND THAT A VOTE IS NOW BEING TAKEN FOR A NEW LINEUP!
WHAP!
THE VOTE IS UNANIMOUS! WE HAVE ARRIVED AT AN AGREEMENT FOR A NEW LINEUP!
LET THE RECORDING SECRETARY ENTER THE NAMES OF THE NEW PRIMARY TEAM INTO THE OFFICIAL MINUTES...
...THOR, SERSI, VISION, QUASAR, BLACK WIDOW AND SHE-HULK!
DON'T FORGET ABOUT YOURSELF, CAP-- BEING CHAIRMAN AND ALL --
ACCORDING TO THE NEW BYLAWS, I AM THE CHAIR-BEING, THERE BEING MEMBERS WHO ARE TECHNICALLY NOT QUITE HUMAN --
-- EXACTLY.
NO OFFENSE THERE, VISION.
NONE TAKEN.

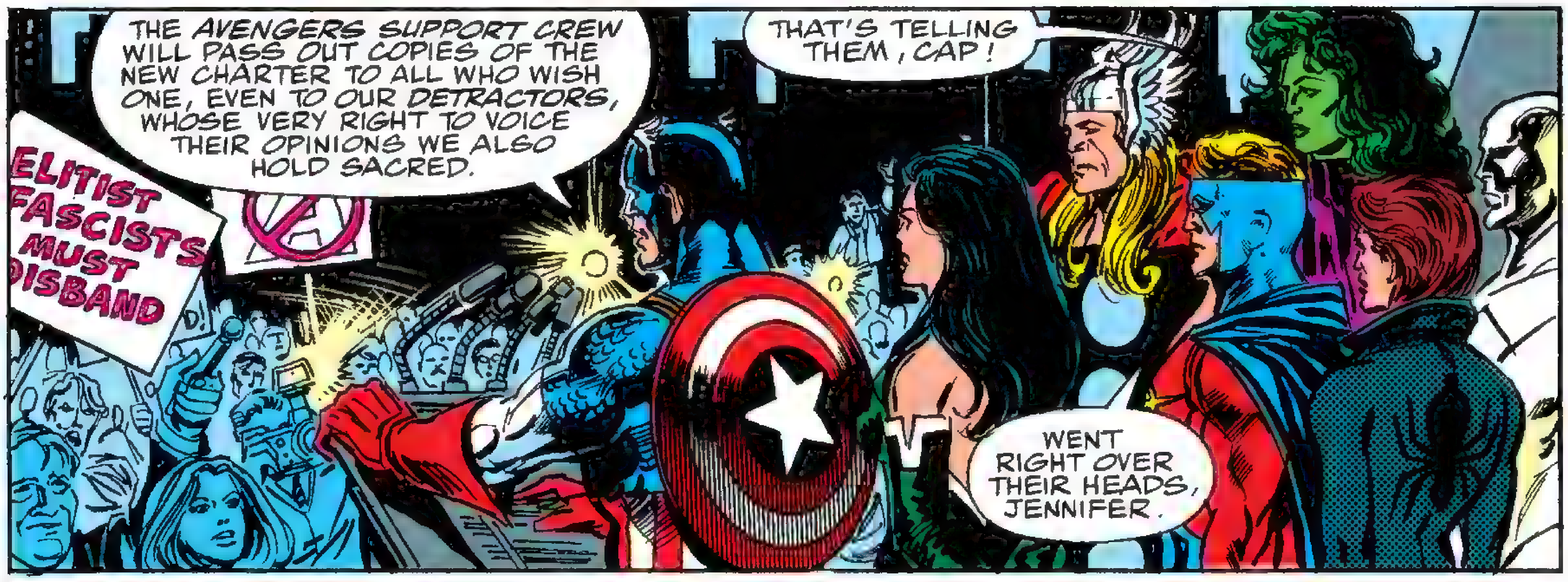

LISTEN UP! IN ADDITION TO THE *PRIMARY TEAM*, THERE SHALL BE SEVEN *RESERVE SUBSTITUTES*. ALL REMAINING AVENGERS NOT IN THE PRIMARY TEAM OR RESERVE SUBSTITUTES SHALL BE IN THE *INACTIVE RESERVES*.
PRIMARY TEAM AVENGERS MUST ANSWER ALL *CALLS TO ASSEMBLE*. IF UNABLE TO RESPOND, THE AVENGER MUST NOTIFY THAT SPECIFIC MEMBER'S RESERVE SUBSTITUTE. SO EACH RESERVE SUBSTITUTE MUST BE CAREFULLY CHOSEN TO BE A FITTING REPLACEMENT--
ZZZZZZZ
--PLEASE BEAR THAT IN MIND FOR THE NEXT ROUND OF *VOTING*...
MORE VOTING? WE HAVE TO HAVE MULTIPLE NOMINATIONS FOR *EACH* REPLACEMENT?
IT'S THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS...
HEADS UP, *HERC*!
CAUGHT YOU *NAPPING*, DUDE!
WHAT? WHY, YOU IMPUDENT--
HEY! LIGHTEN UP!
EVERYBODY IS *REST-LESS*! CAN WE *PLEASE* GET THE VOTE OVER WITH?
MAY I REITERATE THE IMPORTANCE OF SELECTING APPROPRIATE RESERVE SUBSTITUTES? THE RESERVIST SHOULD BE CAPABLE OF REPLACING THE POWERS OR TALENTS OF THE REPLACEE AND THAT RESERVIST SHOULD BE ONE WHO IS ACTUALLY AVAILABLE AND WILLING, AND--
ENOUGH OF THIS PETTIFOGGERY! LET US *VOTE*!

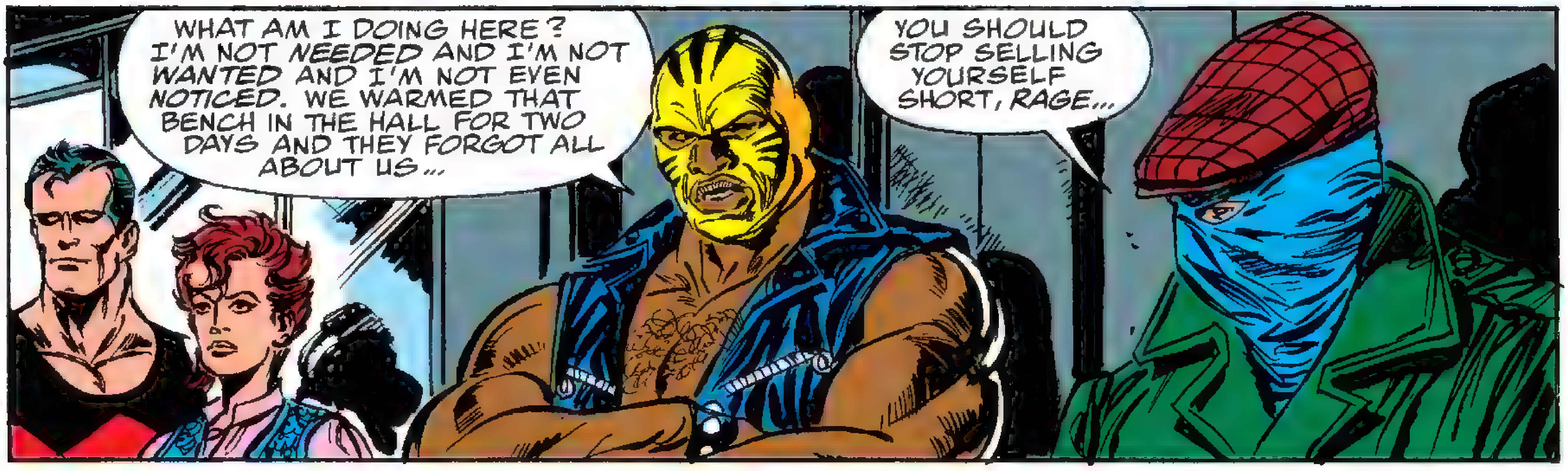

MORE COFFEE AND DONUTS, *JARVIS?* ARE THEY *STILL* VOTING IN THERE?
IF I COULD TELL YOU THAT, THEY WOULDN'T NEED TO HAVE A *CLOSED* MEETING, NOW, WOULD THEY, MR. JAMESON?
HEY, PEG-- YOU EVER SEE *JARVIS* AND THE *VISION* TOGETHER AT THE SAME TIME?
NO... YOU DON'T THINK--? YOU'RE PULLING MY LEG, AREN'T YOU, O'BRIEN?
SURE. *VISION'S* GOT TOO MUCH OF A SENSE OF HUMOR TO GET AWAY WITH IMPERSONATING JARVIS.
HEY, JOHN-- WHAT'S YOUR TAKE ON THE GUY WITH THE BAG OVER HIS HEAD?
SOMETHING VAGUELY *FAMILIAR* ABOUT HIM. NOTICE THAT *GRITTY* SOUND HE MAKES WHEN HE WALKS ON THE TILE FLOOR?
BRIEN
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO MAKE OF ALL THIS...
...I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, BUT APPARENTLY THE *AVENGERS* INVITED THE BOTH OF US TO THIS AFFAIR AND SO FAR, ALL WE GOT TO DO IS HANG OUT IN THE *HALL* FOR CLOSE TO TWO DAYS!
WHAT DO THEY WANT FROM US?
COULD BE, *RAGE*...
...THAT WHAT THEY *WANT* FROM US, IS SOMETHING WE MIGHT BE LUCKY ENOUGH TO *PROVIDE*.

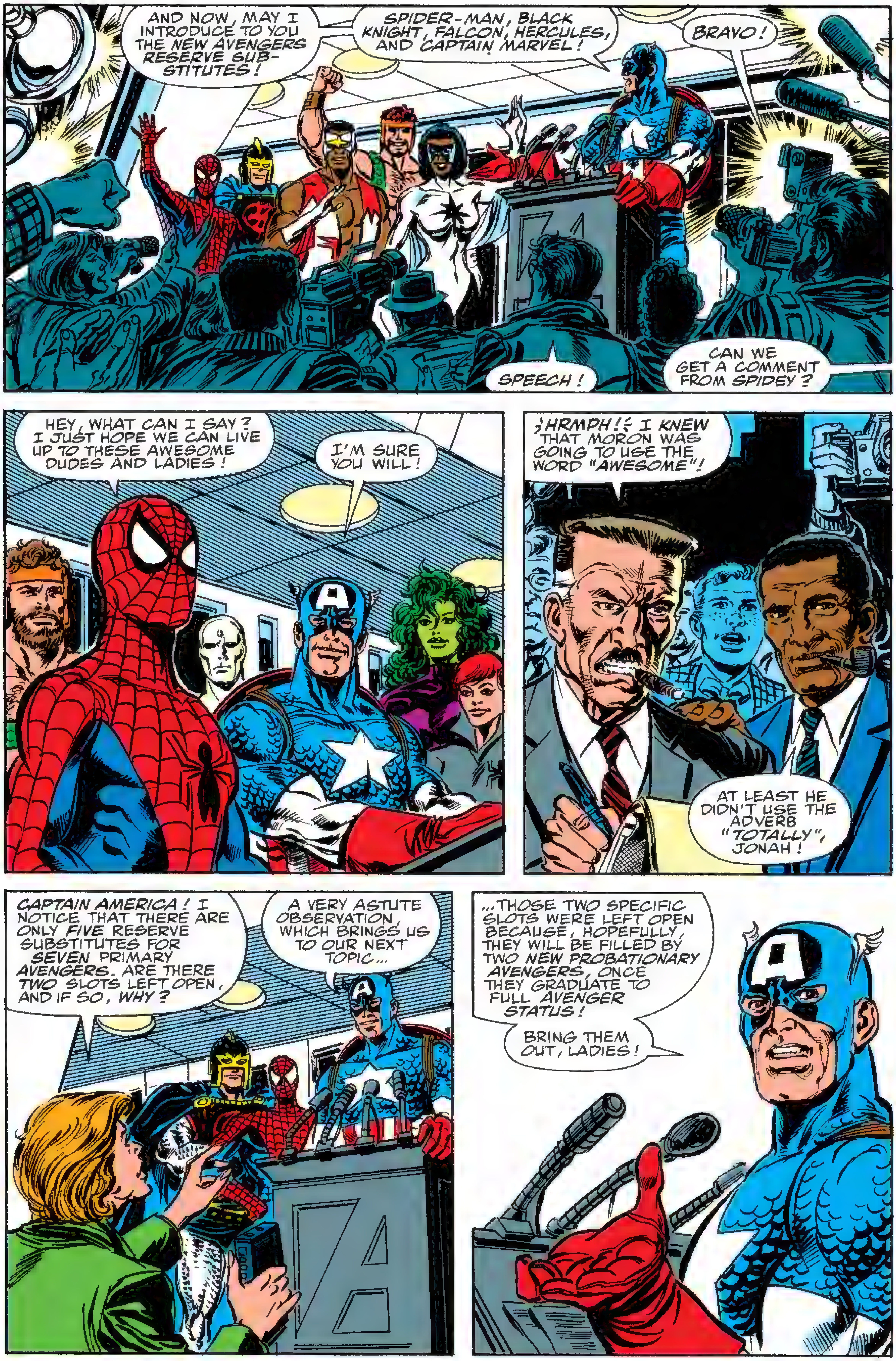

MEANWHILE, IN BROOKLYN...
I'M L.D.50 AND NOBODY PUSHES ME AROUND...
...ESPECIALLY NOT AN EGREGIOUS BROBDINGNAGIAN LIKE RAGE!
WHAT RIGHT DOES HE HAVE TO INTERFERE WITH OUR BUSINESS? WE ARE BUT DISPENSERS OF HAPPINESS! IS IT OUR FAULT IF PEOPLE ABUSE THE PHARMACEUTICAL PALLIATIVES WE PROVIDE?
YEAH! WE DON'T MAKE 'EM TAKE DRUGS!
...APPARENTLY THE AVENGERS' MEETING IS NOW OVER AND CAPTAIN AMERICA IS ABOUT TO READ A PREPARED STATEMENT. A LARGE CROWD HAS GATHERED, INCLUDING SOME PROTESTERS--
SUPERHEROES ARE SUPPOSED TO BATTLE SUPER-VILLAINS! NOW THIS RAGE IS FOMENTING CHANGE! AS THE SOCIAL ORDER DISINTEGRATES, MORE OF THESE SUPER-POLLYANNAS WILL START MEDDLING IN OUR BUSINESS ON THE STREET LEVEL!
WE DEALERS HAVE TO ACT, FOR OUR SURVIVAL!
THIS IS TRULY A MIND TO MY LIKING! THERE IS SUCH CLARITY TO HIS INTENTIONS!
YOU FOUND A PROSPECTIVE ONE ALREADY, NGH?
A GEM! UNPOLISHED, OF COURSE, BUT FLAWLESSLY EVIL!
COME, MY MERRY MINIONS! WE ARE AMONG OUR OWN KIND! I'M SO PLEASED, I SHALL LOWER MYSELF TO SPEAK IN THEIR VERNACULAR!

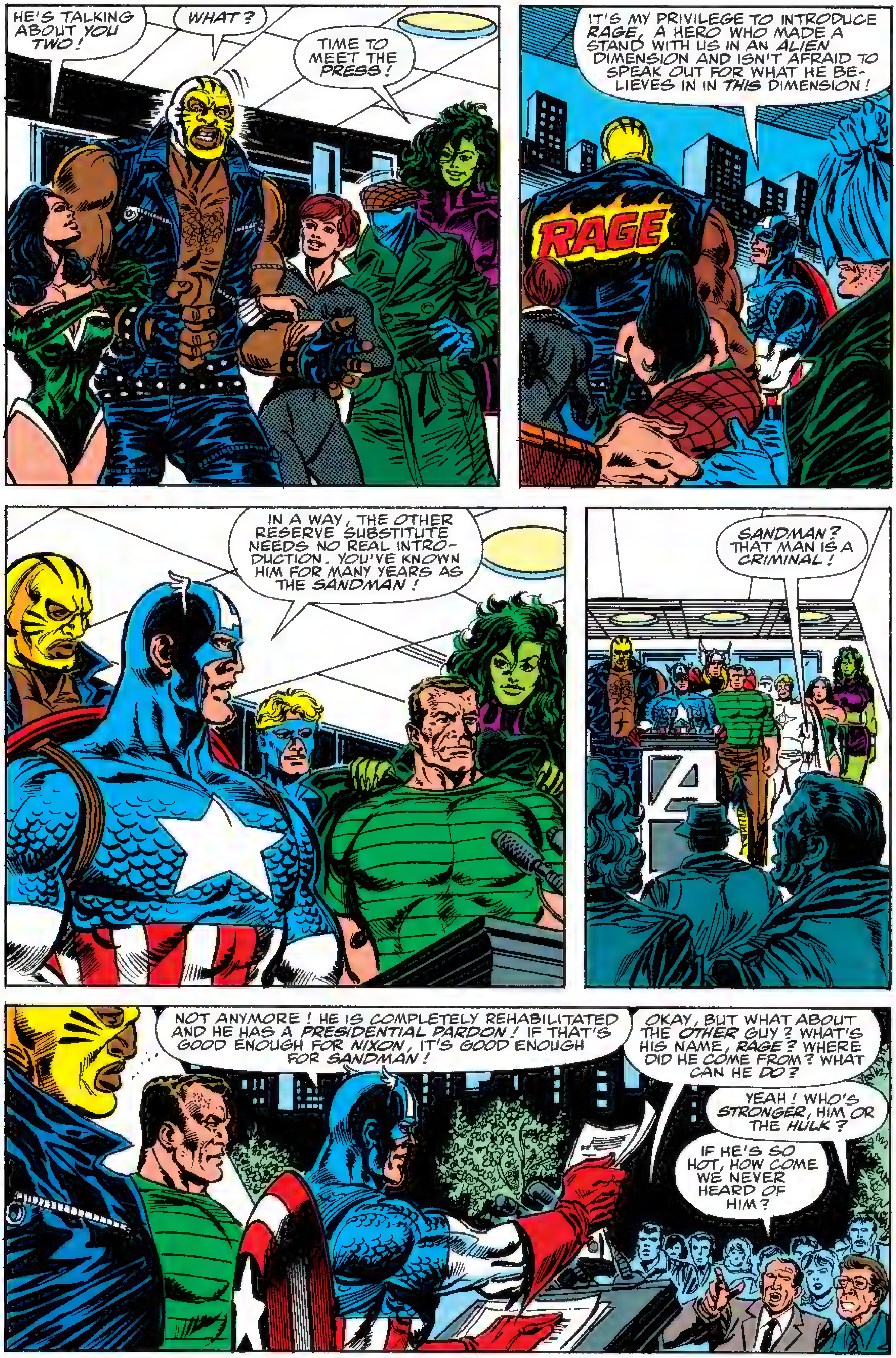

AND FURTHER-MORE--
CRAACKK!
WHAT'S POPPING, HOME? HEY, YOU AND ME, WE HAVE TO TALK MEGA-DEAL HERE, COMPRENDE?
I GOT THE POWERS AND YOU KNOW THE TURF. I'M NEW IN TOWN AND YOU GOT THE MOVES. TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE BOOGIE. ARE WE DOWN? CAN WE GET BAD WITH EACH OTHER, OR WHAT?
UHH... I KNOW MY GOETHE...
...YOU AREN'T LUCIFER OR ANY OF THE THOUSAND OTHER NAMES OF ULTIMATE EVIL, ARE YOU? MY SOUL ISN'T IN JEOPARDY?
IF YOU HAD ONE, WHY WOULD I WANT THE FUNKY OL' THING? THIS IS BIDNESS! USED SOULS ARE A DRUG ON THE MARKET!
COULD YOU REALLY HELP RID ME OF RAGE?
HE'S A MENSCH, RIGHT? HE'S GOT HONOR, FEELINGS, AND A SENSE OF OBLIGATION-- A REGULAR STAND-UP GUY! ALL YOU GOTTA DO IS FIND WHAT HE LOVES, AND TRASH IT!
YOU CLOCKIN' THIS, OR DO YOU ALWAYS LOOK THIS STUPIFIED?
UHHH... IF YOU'RE SO POWERFUL, WHY DO YOU NEED US?
LET'S JUST SAY THAT ME AND MY PAISANOS GOT TO MAINTAIN A LOW PROFILE IN THE LIGHT OF PRIOR IMPROPRIETIES!
YOU'RE ON THE LAM--!
JUST FOR THE TIME BEING...

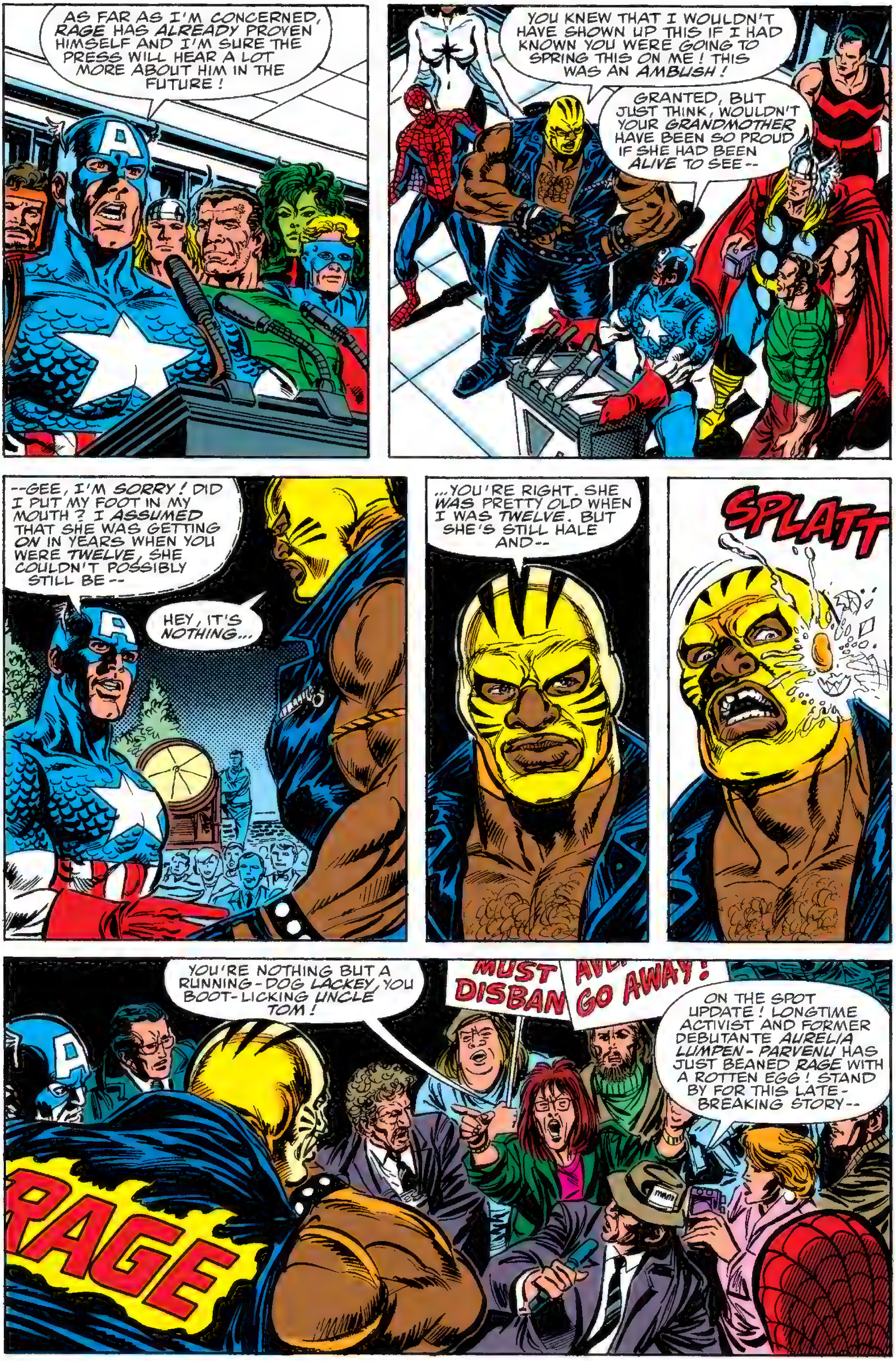

...WHEN WE GET OUR ACT TOGETHER, WE'RE GONNA TAKE THE SHOW ON THE *ROAD* AND *KNOCK 'EM DEAD IN THE AISLES!*
...AND SO THE *NEW LINE-UP* FOR THE *AVENGERS* SHALL BE *THOR, SERSI, QUASAR, SHE-HULK, VISION, BLACK WIDOW,* AND MYSELF, *CAPTAIN AMERICA!*
I'M SURE I SPEAK FOR THE OTHERS WHEN I PLEDGE TO YOU THAT THE *AVENGERS* SHALL CONTINUE TO SERVE AS WE HAVE ALWAYS SERVED AND THAT WE SHALL NEVER FORGET WHAT THE WORDS *"AVENGERS ASSEMBLE"* STAND FOR!
HOORAY!
IT STANDS FOR *FASCIST VIGILANTES!!* WHEN DO WE, THE *PEOPLE*, GET A CHANCE TO SEE THIS *NEW CHARTER?* WHAT KIND OF *DEAL* DID YOU MAKE WITH THE *POLITICIANS* AND THE *PLUTOCRATS?*


THE *AVENGERS SUPPORT CREW* WILL PASS OUT COPIES OF THE NEW CHARTER TO ALL WHO WISH ONE, EVEN TO OUR *DETRACTORS,* WHOSE VERY RIGHT TO VOICE THEIR OPINIONS WE ALSO HOLD SACRED.
THAT'S TELLING THEM, CAP!
ELITIST FASCISTS MUST DISBAND
WENT RIGHT OVER THEIR HEADS, JENNIFER.

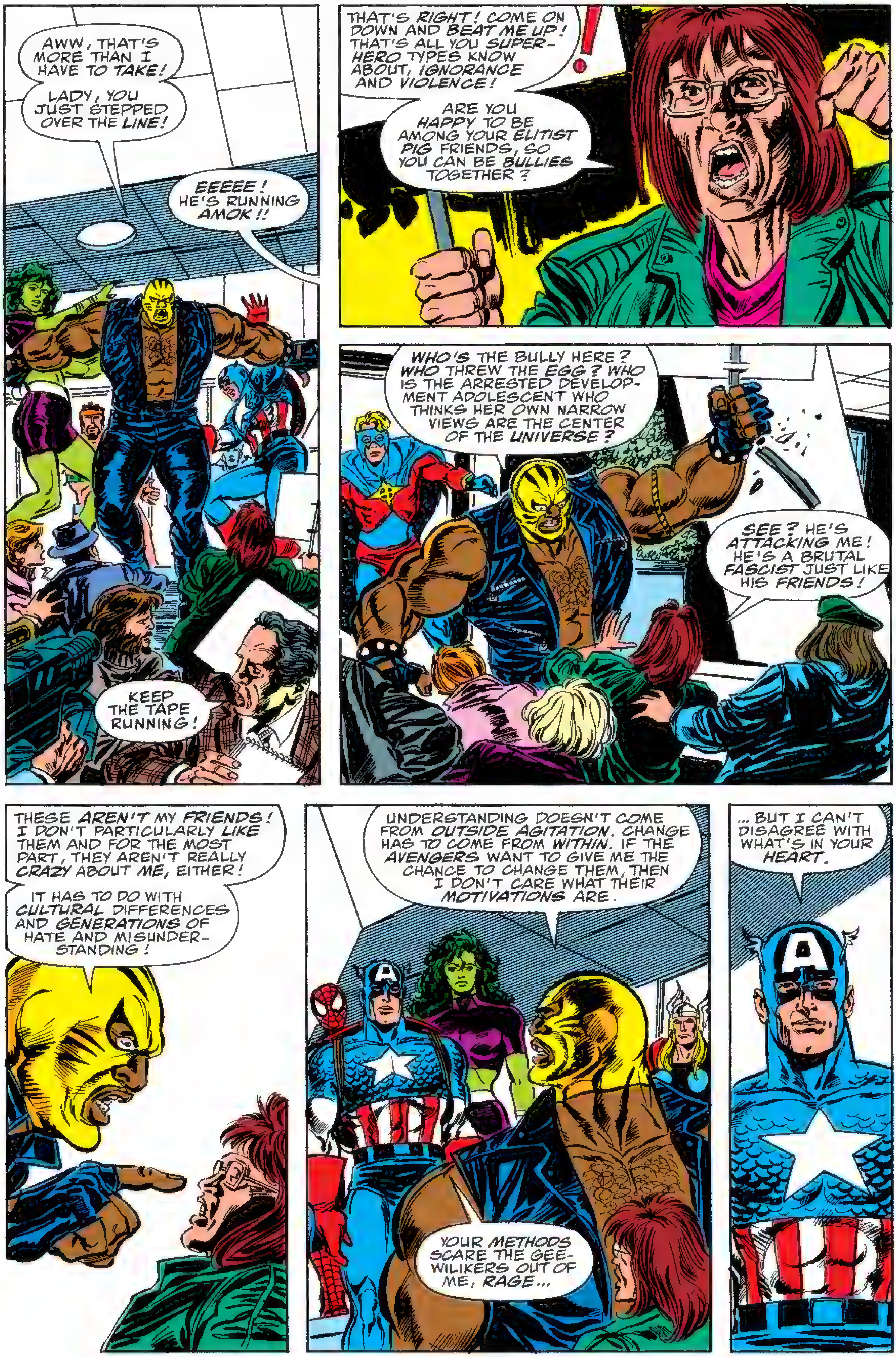

WHAT AM I DOING HERE? I'M NOT *NEEDED* AND I'M NOT EVEN *NOTICED.* WE WARMED THAT BENCH IN THE HALL FOR TWO DAYS AND THEY FORGOT ALL ABOUT US...
YOU SHOULD STOP SELLING YOURSELF SHORT, *RAGE*...

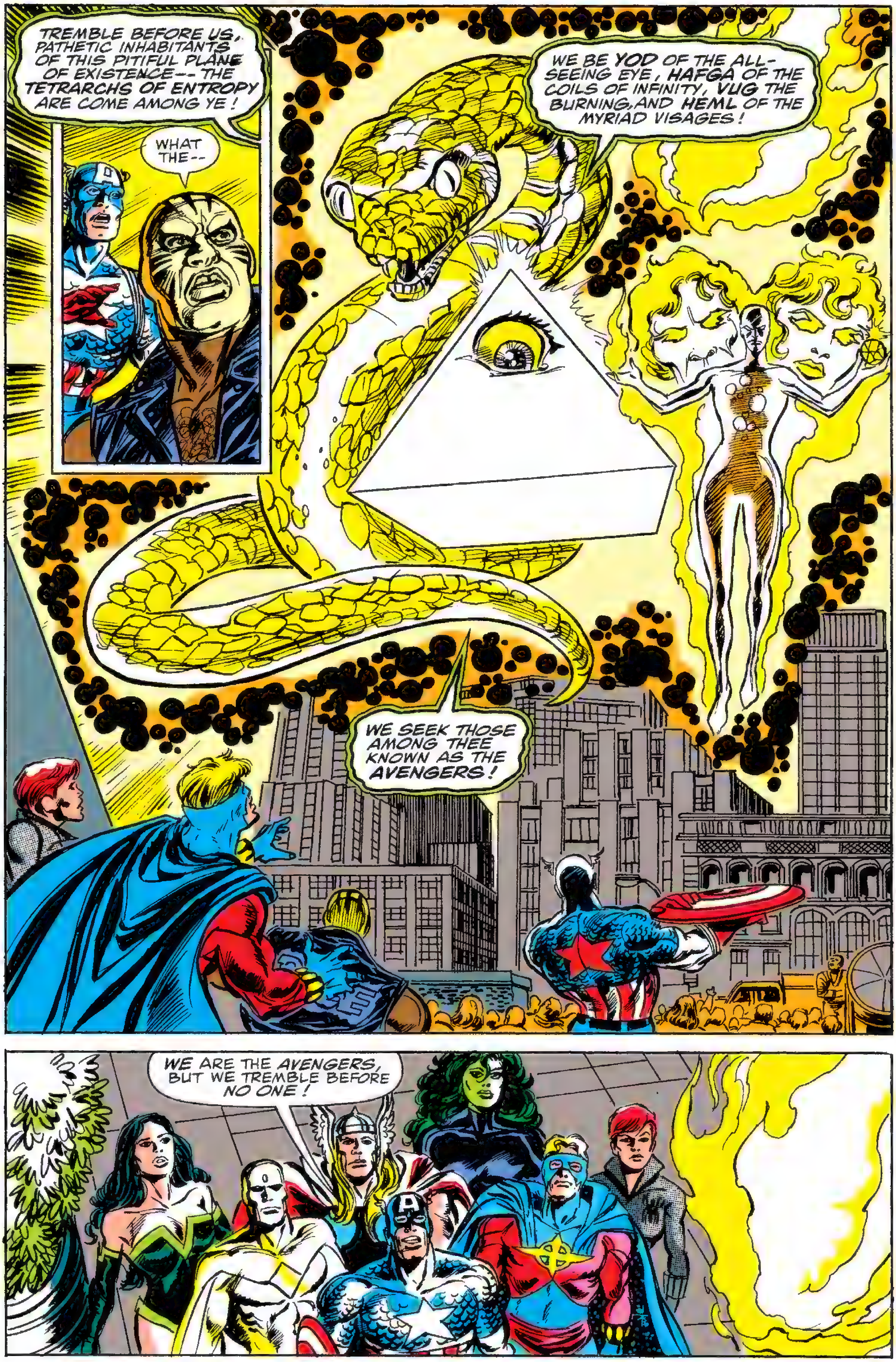

AND NOW, MAY I INTRODUCE TO YOU THE *NEW* AVENGERS RESERVE SUBSTITUTES!
SPIDER-MAN, BLACK KNIGHT, FALCON, HERCULES, AND CAPTAIN MARVEL!
BRAVO!
SPEECH!
CAN WE GET A COMMENT FROM SPIDEY?
HEY, WHAT CAN I SAY? I JUST HOPE WE CAN LIVE UP TO THESE AWESOME DUDES AND LADIES!
I'M SURE YOU WILL!
HRMPH! I KNEW THAT MORON WAS GOING TO USE THE WORD "*AWESOME*"!
AT LEAST HE DIDN'T USE THE ADVERB "*TOTALLY*", JONAH!
CAPTAIN AMERICA! I NOTICE THAT THERE ARE ONLY *FIVE* RESERVE SUBSTITUTES FOR *SEVEN* PRIMARY *AVENGERS*. ARE THERE *TWO* SLOTS LEFT OPEN, AND IF SO, *WHY?*
A VERY ASTUTE OBSERVATION, WHICH BRINGS US TO OUR NEXT TOPIC...
...THOSE TWO SPECIFIC SLOTS WERE LEFT OPEN BECAUSE, HOPEFULLY, THEY WILL BE FILLED BY TWO *NEW PROBATIONARY AVENGERS*, ONCE THEY GRADUATE TO FULL *AVENGER STATUS!*
BRING THEM OUT, LADIES!

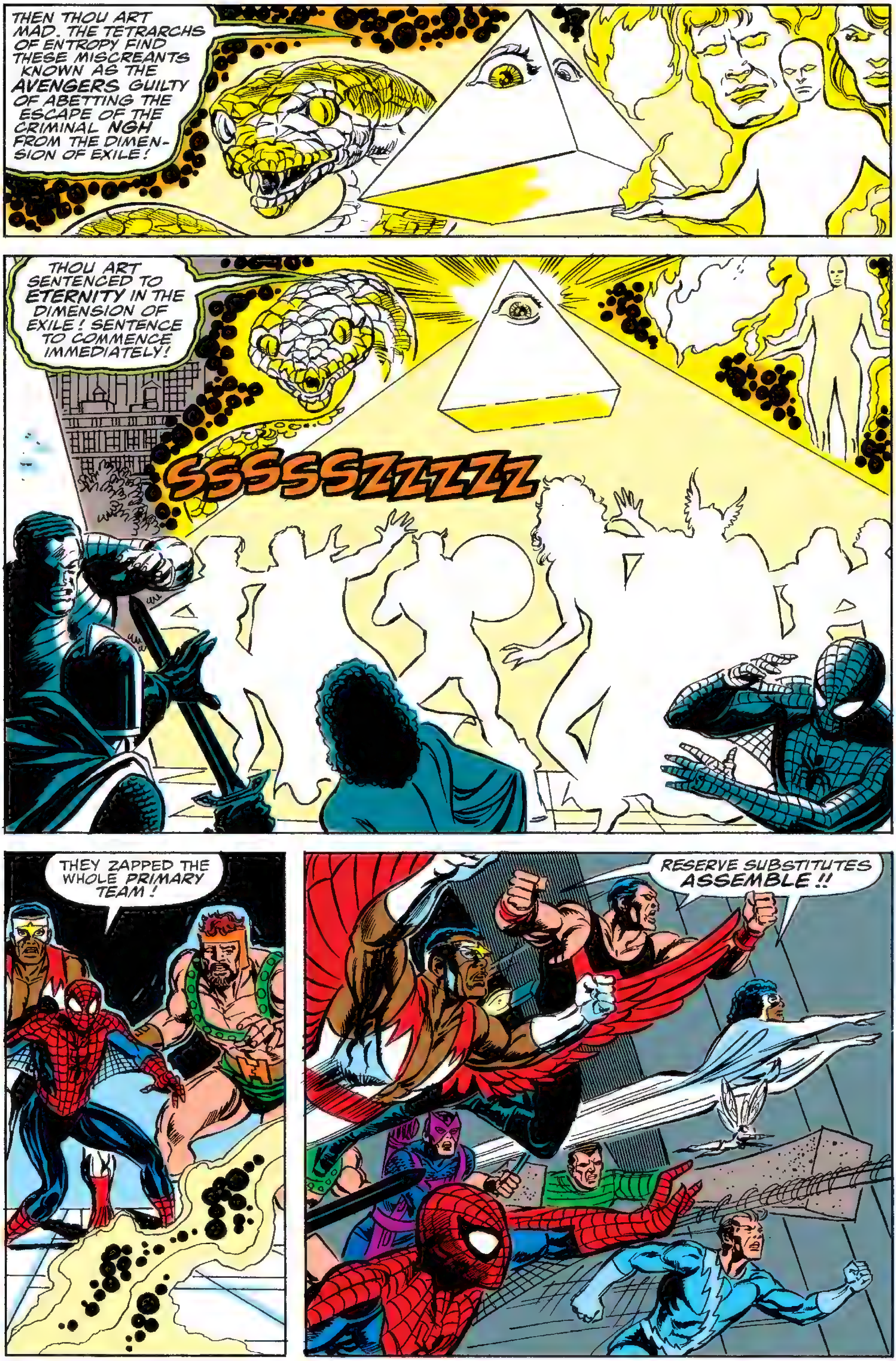

HE'S TALKING ABOUT *YOU* TWO!
WHAT?
TIME TO MEET THE *PRESS!*
IT'S MY PRIVILEGE TO INTRODUCE *RAGE*, A HERO WHO MADE A STAND WITH US IN AN *ALIEN* DIMENSION AND ISN'T AFRAID TO SPEAK OUT FOR WHAT HE BELIEVES IN IN *THIS* DIMENSION!
RAGE
IN A WAY, THE OTHER RESERVE SUBSTITUTE NEEDS NO REAL INTRODUCTION. YOU'VE KNOWN HIM FOR MANY YEARS AS THE *SANDMAN!*
SANDMAN? THAT MAN IS A *CRIMINAL!*
NOT ANYMORE! HE IS COMPLETELY REHABILITATED AND HE HAS A *PRESIDENTIAL PARDON!* IF THAT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR *NIXON*, IT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR *SANDMAN!*
OKAY, BUT WHAT ABOUT THE *OTHER* GUY? WHAT'S HIS NAME, *RAGE?* WHERE DID HE COME FROM? WHAT CAN HE *DO?*
YEAH! WHO'S *STRONGER*, HIM OR THE *HULK?*
IF HE'S SO HOT, HOW COME WE NEVER HEARD OF HIM?

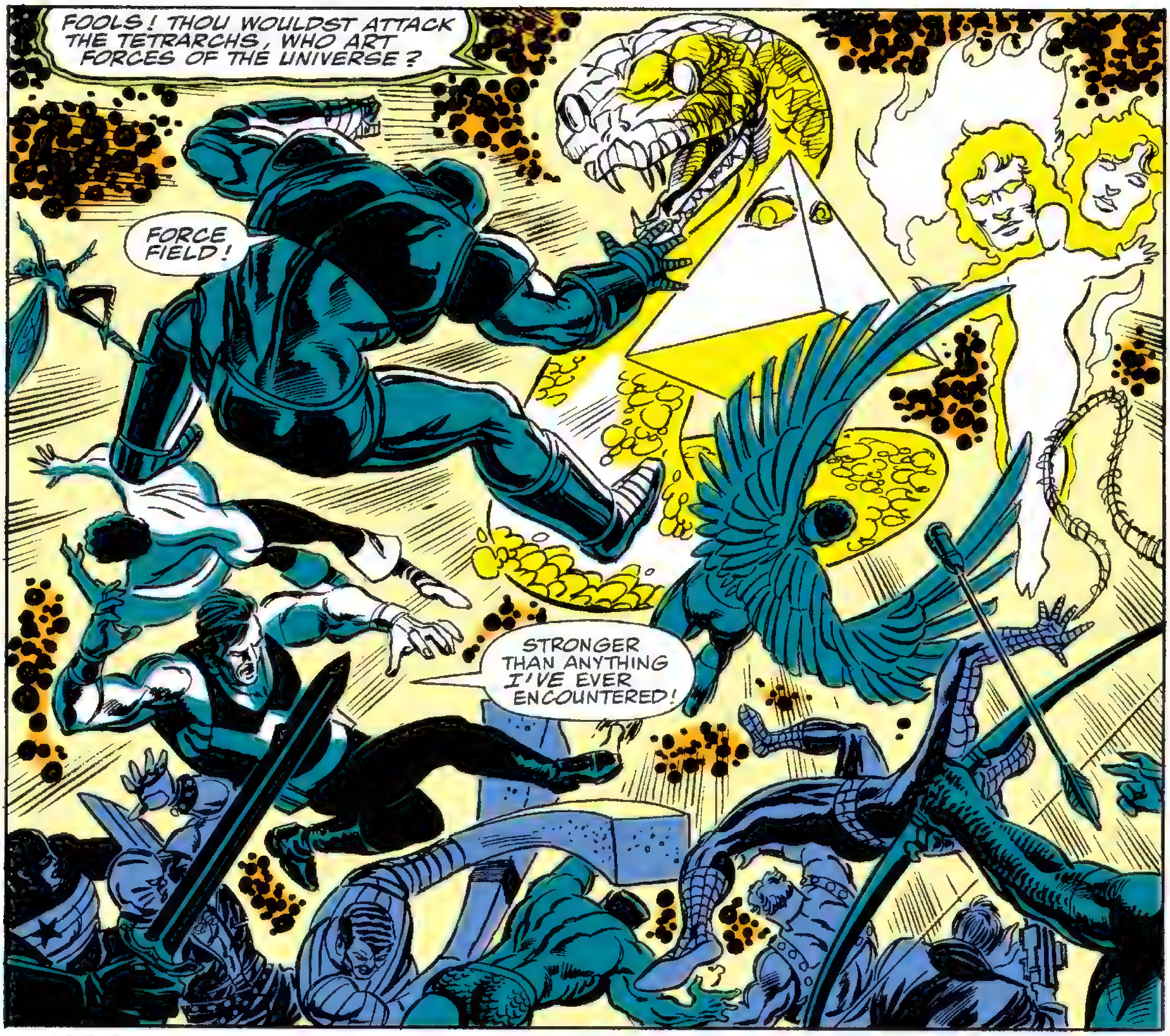

AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, RAGE HAS ALREADY PROVEN HIMSELF AND I'M SURE THE PRESS WILL HEAR A LOT MORE ABOUT HIM IN THE FUTURE!
YOU KNEW THAT I WOULDN'T HAVE SHOWN UP THIS IF I HAD KNOWN YOU WERE GOING TO SPRING THIS ON ME! THIS WAS AN AMBUSH!
GRANTED, BUT JUST THINK, WOULDN'T YOUR GRANDMOTHER HAVE BEEN SO PROUD IF SHE HAD BEEN ALIVE TO SEE--
--GEE, I'M SORRY! DID I PUT MY FOOT IN MY MOUTH? I ASSUMED THAT SHE WAS GETTING ON IN YEARS WHEN YOU WERE TWELVE, SHE COULDN'T POSSIBLY STILL BE--
HEY, IT'S NOTHING...
...YOU'RE RIGHT. SHE WAS PRETTY OLD WHEN I WAS TWELVE. BUT SHE'S STILL HALE AND--
SPLATT
YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A RUNNING-DOG LACKEY, YOU BOOT-LICKING UNCLE TOM!
MUST DISBAN
GO AWAY!
ON THE SPOT UPDATE! LONGTIME ACTIVIST AND FORMER DEBUTANTE AURELIA LUMPEN-PARVENU HAS JUST BEANED RAGE WITH A ROTTEN EGG! STAND BY FOR THIS LATE-BREAKING STORY--
RAGE

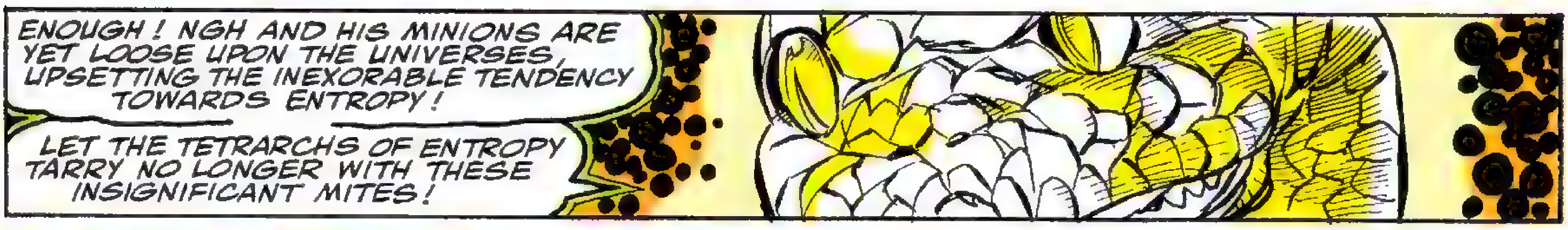
IN BROOKLYN...
HEY! L.D.50! SCOPE THIS OUT...!
...THAT RAGE CHARACTER IS ON THE TV!
NGH! TRANSMITTED IMAGES OF THE CREATURES WE BATTLED IN THE DIMENSION OF EXILE!
YOU THREW DOWN THE AVENGERS AND YOU'RE STILL STANDIN'?
HIS LIPS ARE MOVING, BUT THERE'S NO SOUND!
NOTHING'S WRONG WITH THE TV, HE'S JUST MUTTERING TO HIMSELF!
I SQUATTED ON THAT CHURCH ROOF AND LEARNED YOUR LANGUAGE BY LISTENING AND WATCHING. I CAN READ LIPS LIKE A CHAMP...
...AND THAT UGLY PIECE OF WORK IS RECITING A NAME OVER AND OVER, LIKE A MANTRA --
--GRANNY STAPLES!
NOW, YOU KNOW WHAT HE LOVES!
IF SHE'S IN BROOKLYN, MY ASSOCIATES CAN LOCATE HER WITHIN A MINIMAL TIME FRAME!
DO THAT! I'LL LEAN ON THE OLD BIDDY MY OWNSELF!
...DON'T DO ANYTHING RASH --
LET ME GO. I'M IN CONTROL. JUST HAD TO THINK GOOD THOUGHTS, PUT MYSELF IN THE RIGHT PERSPECTIVE. I'M ALL RIGHT...
ARE YOU SURE?
BETTER BE A NICE SERVILE TOM AND DO WHAT THEY SAY, YOU STOOGE OF THE SLAVE-MONGERS!

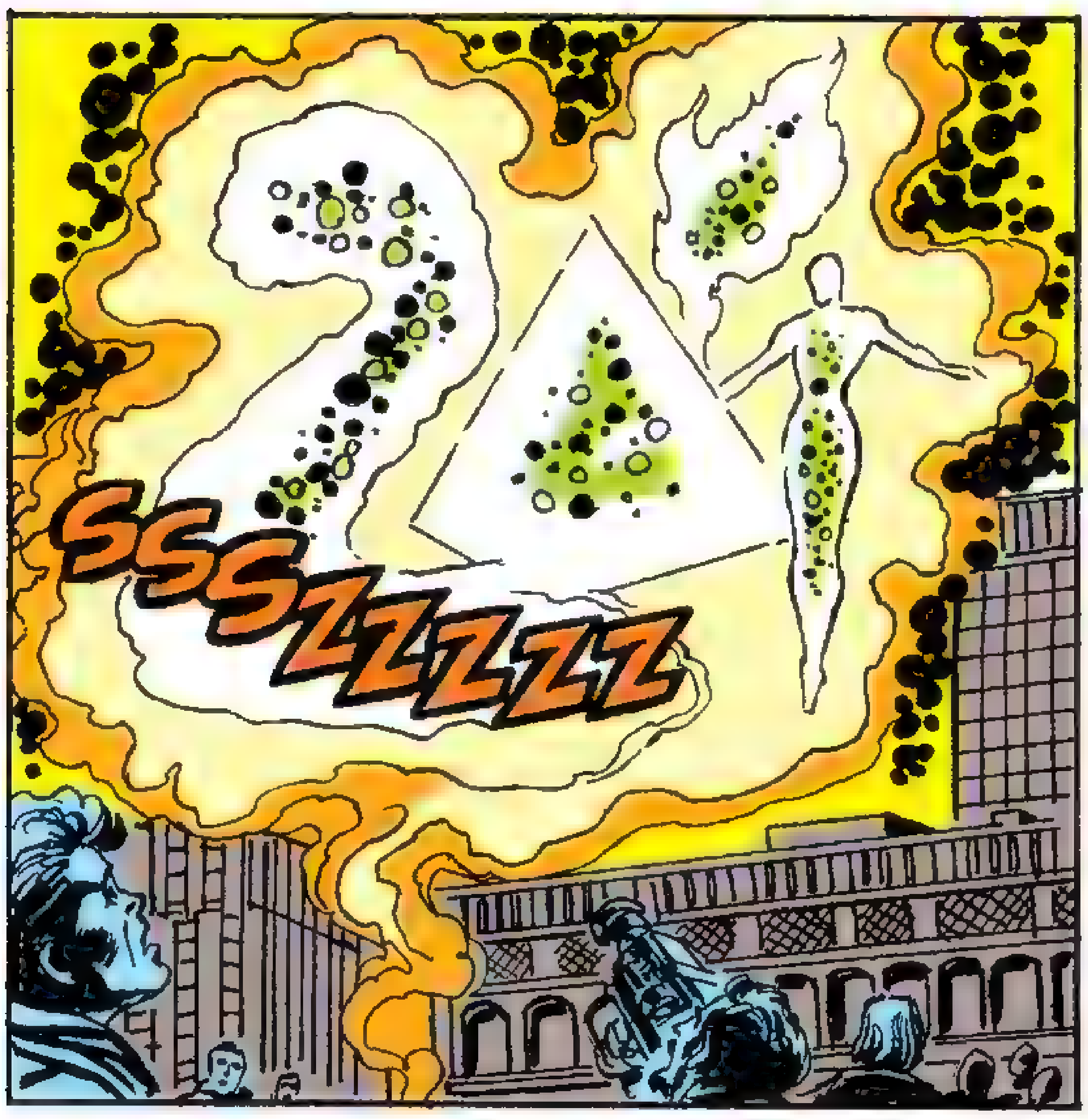

AWW, THAT'S MORE THAN I HAVE TO *TAKE!*
LADY, YOU JUST STEPPED OVER THE *LINE!*
EEEEE! HE'S RUNNING *AMOK!!*
KEEP THE TAPE RUNNING!
THAT'S *RIGHT!* COME ON DOWN AND *BEAT ME UP!* THAT'S ALL YOU *SUPER-HERO* TYPES KNOW ABOUT, *IGNORANCE* AND *VIOLENCE!*
ARE YOU *HAPPY* TO BE AMONG YOUR *ELITIST PIG* FRIENDS, SO YOU CAN BE *BULLIES* TOGETHER?
WHO'S THE BULLY HERE? *WHO* THREW THE *EGG? WHO* IS THE ARRESTED DEVELOPMENT ADOLESCENT WHO THINKS HER OWN NARROW VIEWS ARE THE CENTER OF THE *UNIVERSE?*
SEE? HE'S ATTACKING ME! HE'S A BRUTAL *FASCIST* JUST LIKE HIS *FRIENDS!*
THESE *AREN'T* MY *FRIENDS!* I DON'T PARTICULARLY *LIKE* THEM AND FOR THE MOST PART, THEY AREN'T REALLY *CRAZY* ABOUT *ME,* EITHER!
IT HAS TO DO WITH *CULTURAL* DIFFERENCES AND *GENERATIONS* OF HATE AND MISUNDERSTANDING!
UNDERSTANDING DOESN'T COME FROM *OUTSIDE AGITATION.* CHANGE HAS TO COME FROM *WITHIN.* IF THE *AVENGERS* WANT TO GIVE ME THE CHANCE TO CHANGE THEM, THEN I DON'T CARE WHAT THEIR *MOTIVATIONS* ARE.
YOUR *METHODS* SCARE THE GEE-WILIKERS OUT OF ME, *RAGE*...
...BUT I CAN'T DISAGREE WITH WHAT'S IN YOUR *HEART.*

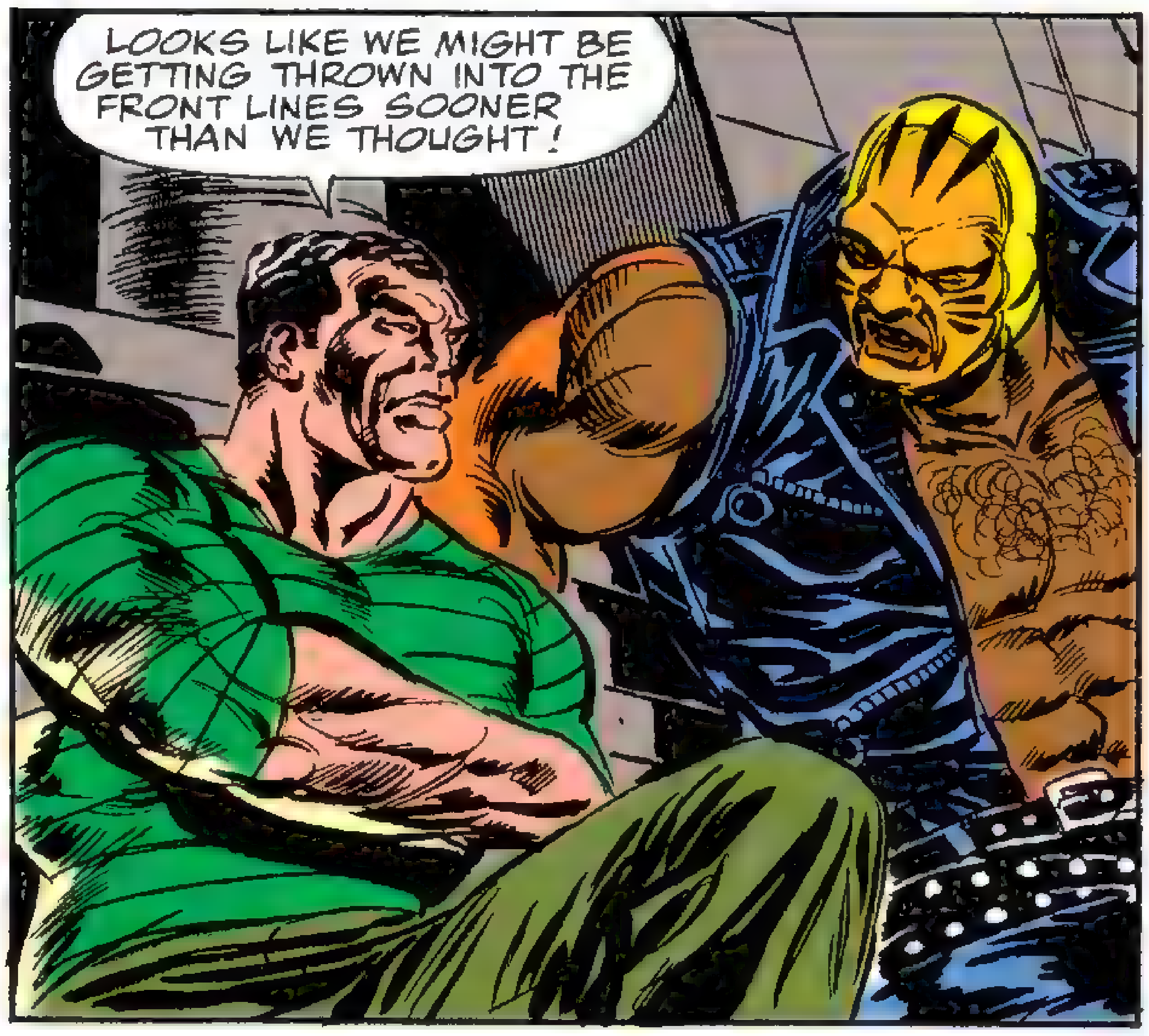

TREMBLE BEFORE US, PATHETIC INHABITANTS OF THIS PITIFUL PLANE OF EXISTENCE-- THE **TETRARCHS OF ENTROPY** ARE COME AMONG YE!
WHAT THE--
WE BE **YOD** OF THE ALL-SEEING EYE, **HAFGA** OF THE COILS OF INFINITY, **VUG** THE BURNING, AND **HEML** OF THE MYRIAD VISAGES!
WE SEEK THOSE AMONG THEE KNOWN AS THE **AVENGERS!**
WE ARE THE *AVENGERS*, BUT WE TREMBLE BEFORE *NO ONE!*

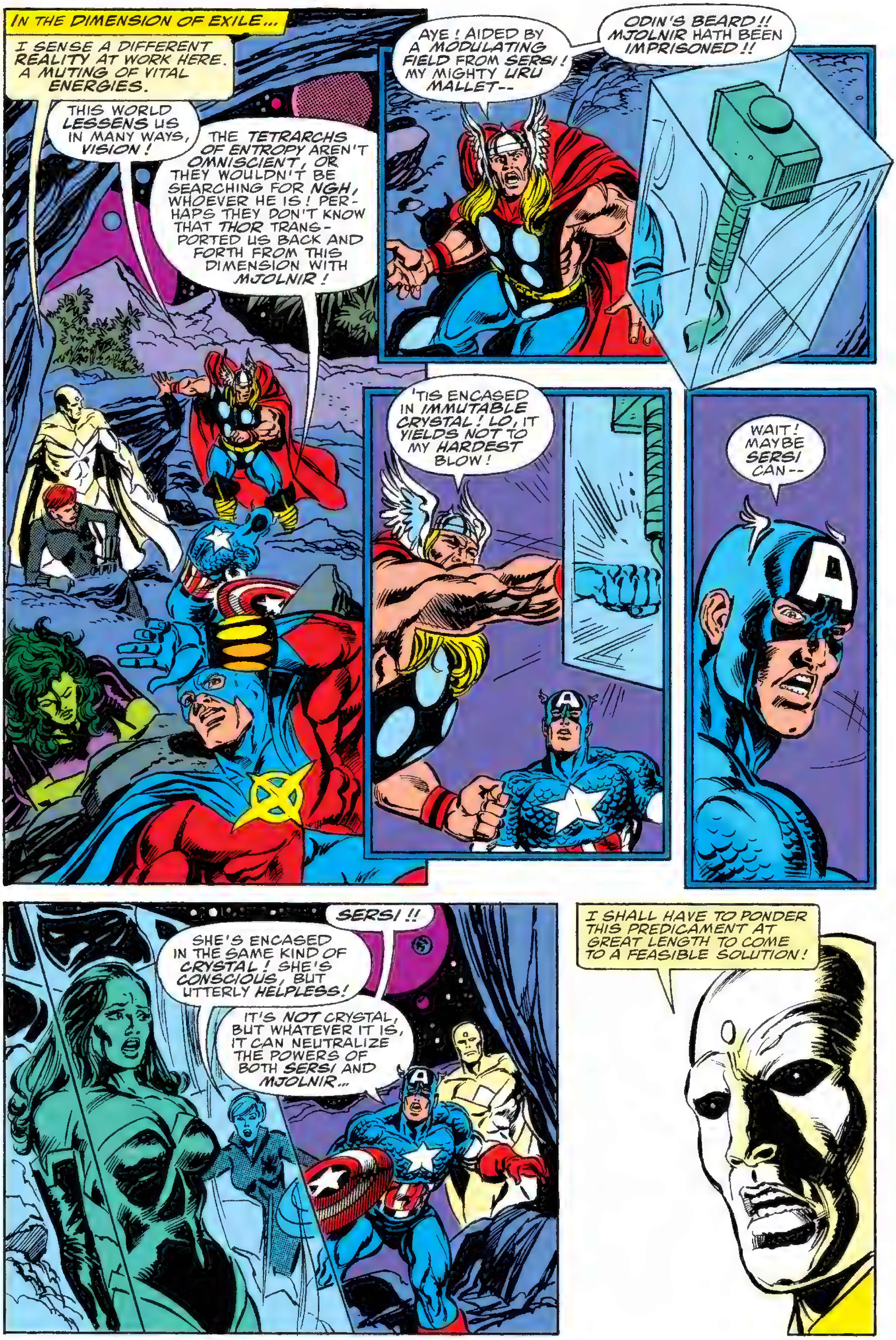

THEN THOU ART MAD. THE TETRARCHS OF ENTROPY FIND THESE MISCREANTS KNOWN AS THE **AVENGERS** GUILTY OF ABETTING THE ESCAPE OF THE CRIMINAL **NGH** FROM THE DIMENSION OF EXILE!
THOU ART SENTENCED TO **ETERNITY** IN THE DIMENSION OF EXILE! SENTENCE TO COMMENCE IMMEDIATELY!
SSSSSZZZZZ
THEY ZAPPED THE WHOLE *PRIMARY* TEAM!
H
RESERVE SUBSTITUTES **ASSEMBLE!!**

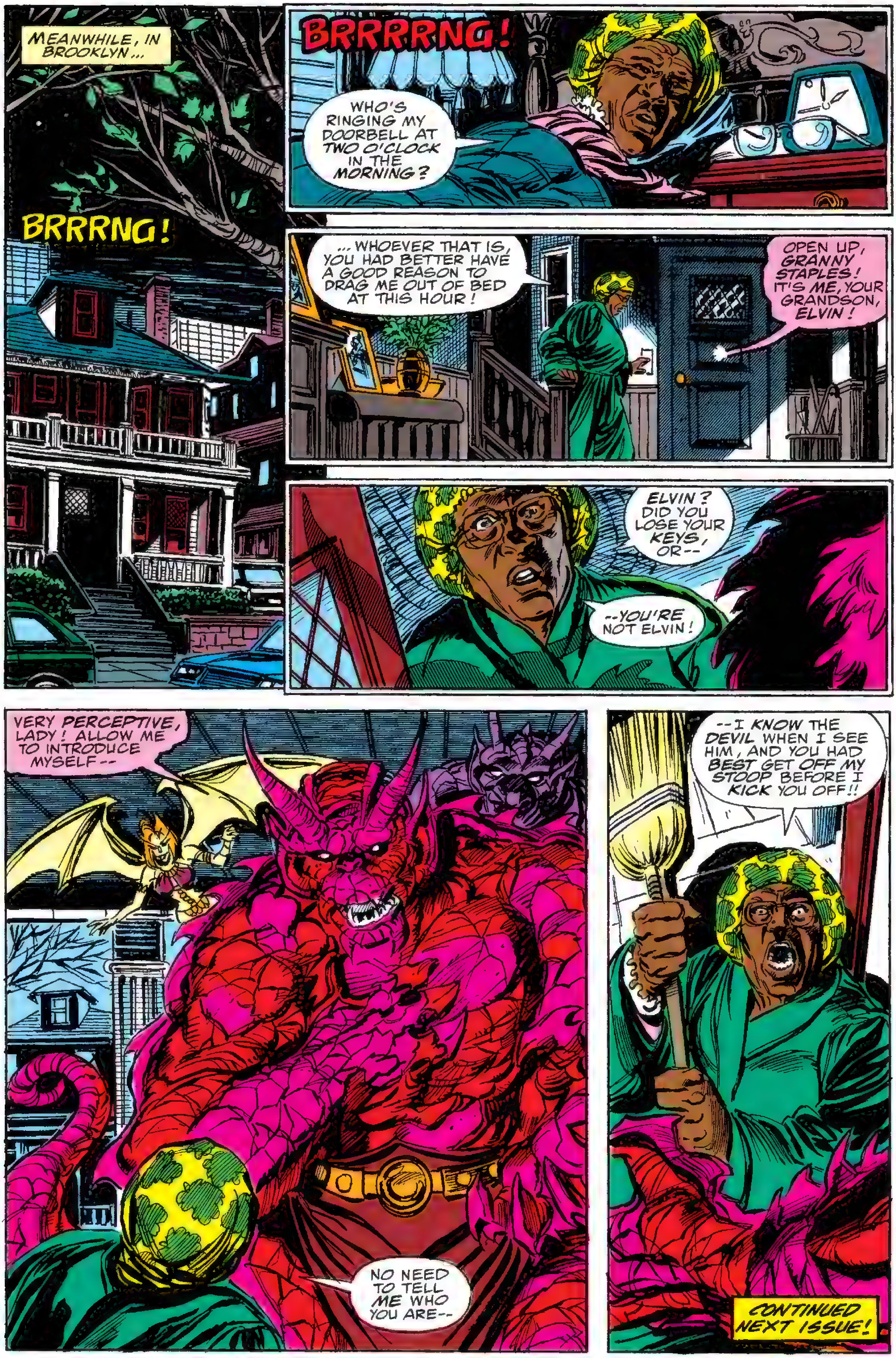

FOOLS! THOU WOULDST ATTACK THE TETRARCHS, WHO ART FORCES OF THE UNIVERSE?
FORCE FIELD!
STRONGER THAN ANYTHING I'VE EVER ENCOUNTERED!


ENOUGH! NGH AND HIS MINIONS ARE YET LOOSE UPON THE UNIVERSES, UPSETTING THE INEXORABLE TENDENCY TOWARDS ENTROPY!
LET THE TETRARCHS OF ENTROPY TARRY NO LONGER WITH THESE INSIGNIFICANT MITES!


SSSZZZZZZ


LOOKS LIKE WE MIGHT BE GETTING THROWN INTO THE FRONT LINES SOONER THAN WE THOUGHT!


IN THE DIMENSION OF EXILE...
I SENSE A DIFFERENT REALITY AT WORK HERE. A MUTING OF VITAL ENERGIES.
THIS WORLD LESSENS US IN MANY WAYS, VISION!
THE TETRARCHS OF ENTROPY AREN'T OMNISCIENT, OR THEY WOULDN'T BE SEARCHING FOR NGH, WHOEVER HE IS! PERHAPS THEY DON'T KNOW THAT THOR TRANSPORTED US BACK AND FORTH FROM THIS DIMENSION WITH MJOLNIR!
AYE! AIDED BY A MODULATING FIELD FROM SERSI! MY MIGHTY URU MALLET--
ODIN'S BEARD!! MJOLNIR HATH BEEN IMPRISONED!!
'TIS ENCASED IN IMMUTABLE CRYSTAL! LO, IT YIELDS NOT TO MY HARDEST BLOW!
WAIT! MAYBE SERSI CAN--
SERSI!!
SHE'S ENCASED IN THE SAME KIND OF CRYSTAL! SHE'S CONSCIOUS, BUT UTTERLY HELPLESS!
IT'S NOT CRYSTAL, BUT WHATEVER IT IS, IT CAN NEUTRALIZE THE POWERS OF BOTH SERSI AND MJOLNIR...
I SHALL HAVE TO PONDER THIS PREDICAMENT AT GREAT LENGTH TO COME TO A FEASIBLE SOLUTION!


MEANWHILE, IN BROOKLYN...
BRRRNG!
BRRRRNG!
WHO'S RINGING MY DOORBELL AT TWO O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING?
...WHOEVER THAT IS, YOU HAD BETTER HAVE A GOOD REASON TO DRAG ME OUT OF BED AT THIS HOUR!
OPEN UP, GRANNY STAPLES! IT'S ME, YOUR GRANDSON, ELVIN!
ELVIN? DID YOU LOSE YOUR KEYS, OR--
--YOU'RE NOT ELVIN!
VERY PERCEPTIVE, LADY! ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF--
NO NEED TO TELL ME WHO YOU ARE--
--I KNOW THE DEVIL WHEN I SEE HIM, AND YOU HAD BEST GET OFF MY STOOP BEFORE I KICK YOU OFF!!
CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE!

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VS. THE TETRARCHS OF ENTROPY!
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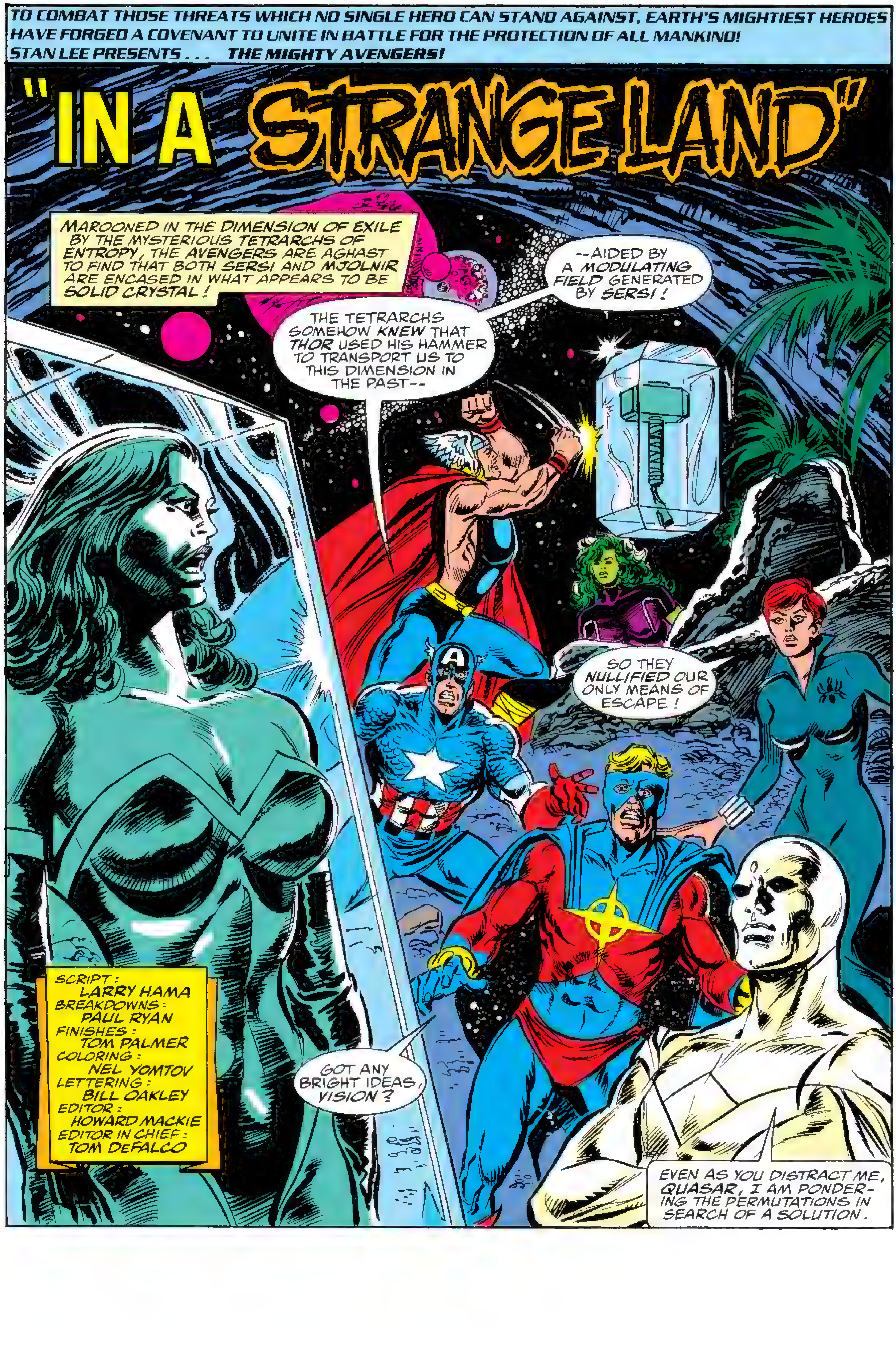
TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND!
STAN LEE PRESENTS . . . THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!
"IN A STRANGE LAND"
MAROONED IN THE DIMENSION OF EXILE BY THE MYSTERIOUS TETRARCHS OF ENTROPY, THE AVENGERS ARE AGHAST TO FIND THAT BOTH SERSI AND MJOLNIR ARE ENCASED IN WHAT APPEARS TO BE SOLID CRYSTAL!
THE TETRARCHS SOMEHOW KNEW THAT THOR USED HIS HAMMER TO TRANSPORT US TO THIS DIMENSION IN THE PAST--
--AIDED BY A MODULATING FIELD GENERATED BY SERSI!
SO THEY NULLIFIED OUR ONLY MEANS OF ESCAPE!
GOT ANY BRIGHT IDEAS, VISION?
EVEN AS YOU DISTRACT ME, QUASAR, I AM PONDERING THE PERMUTATIONS IN SEARCH OF A SOLUTION.
SCRIPT: LARRY HAMA
BREAKDOWNS: PAUL RYAN
FINISHES: TOM PALMER
COLORING: NEL YOMTOV
LETTERING: BILL OAKLEY
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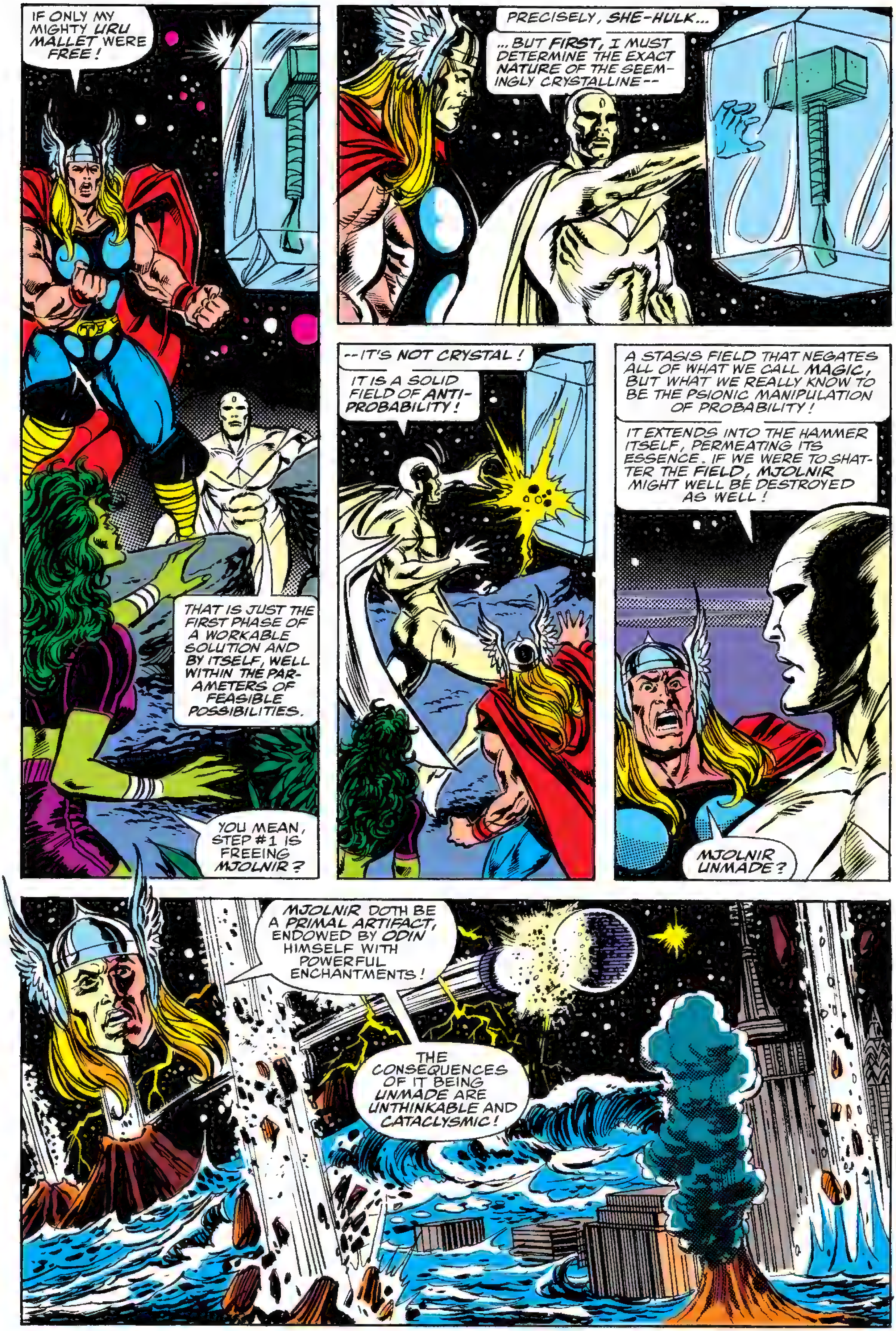
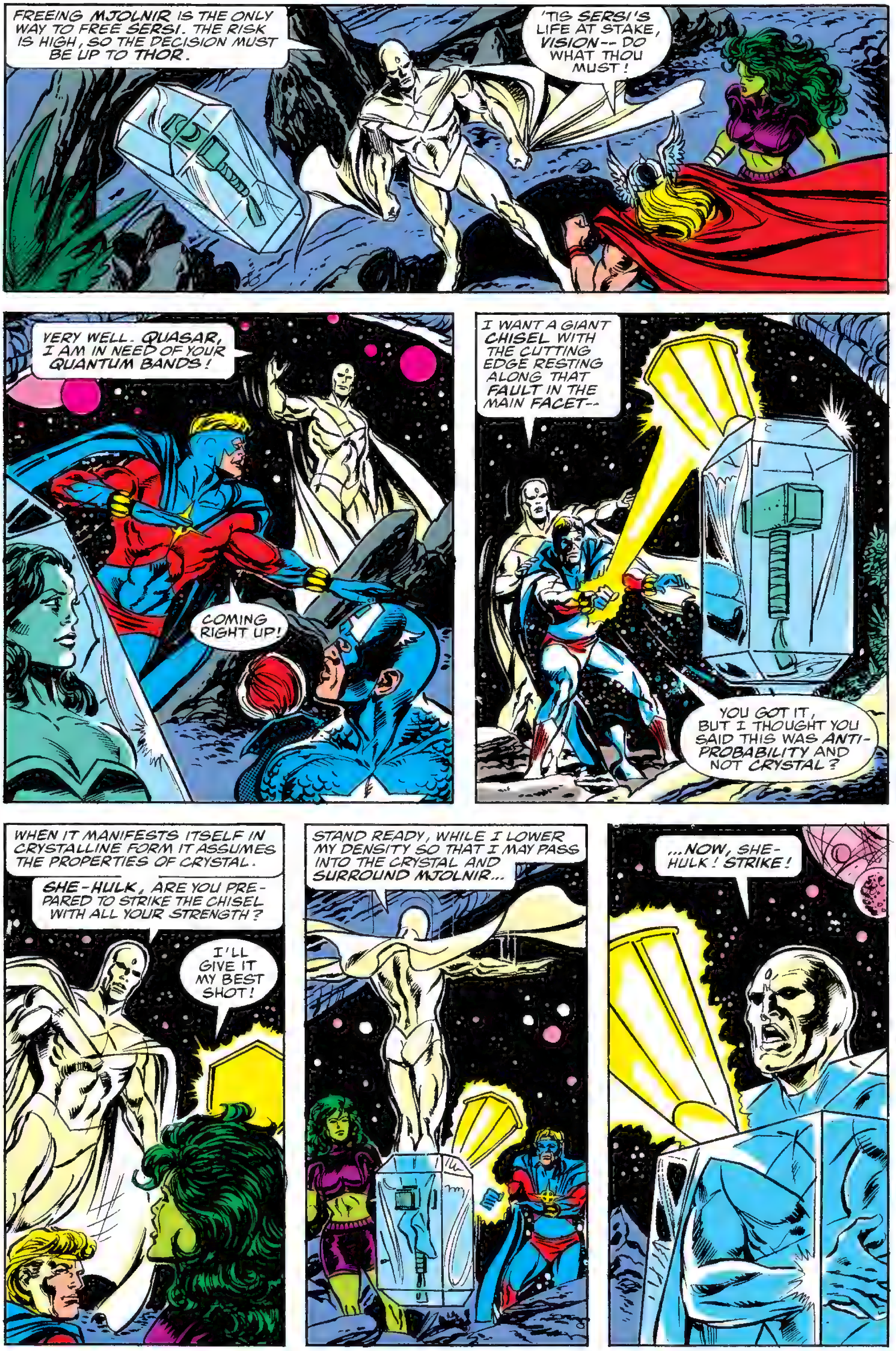
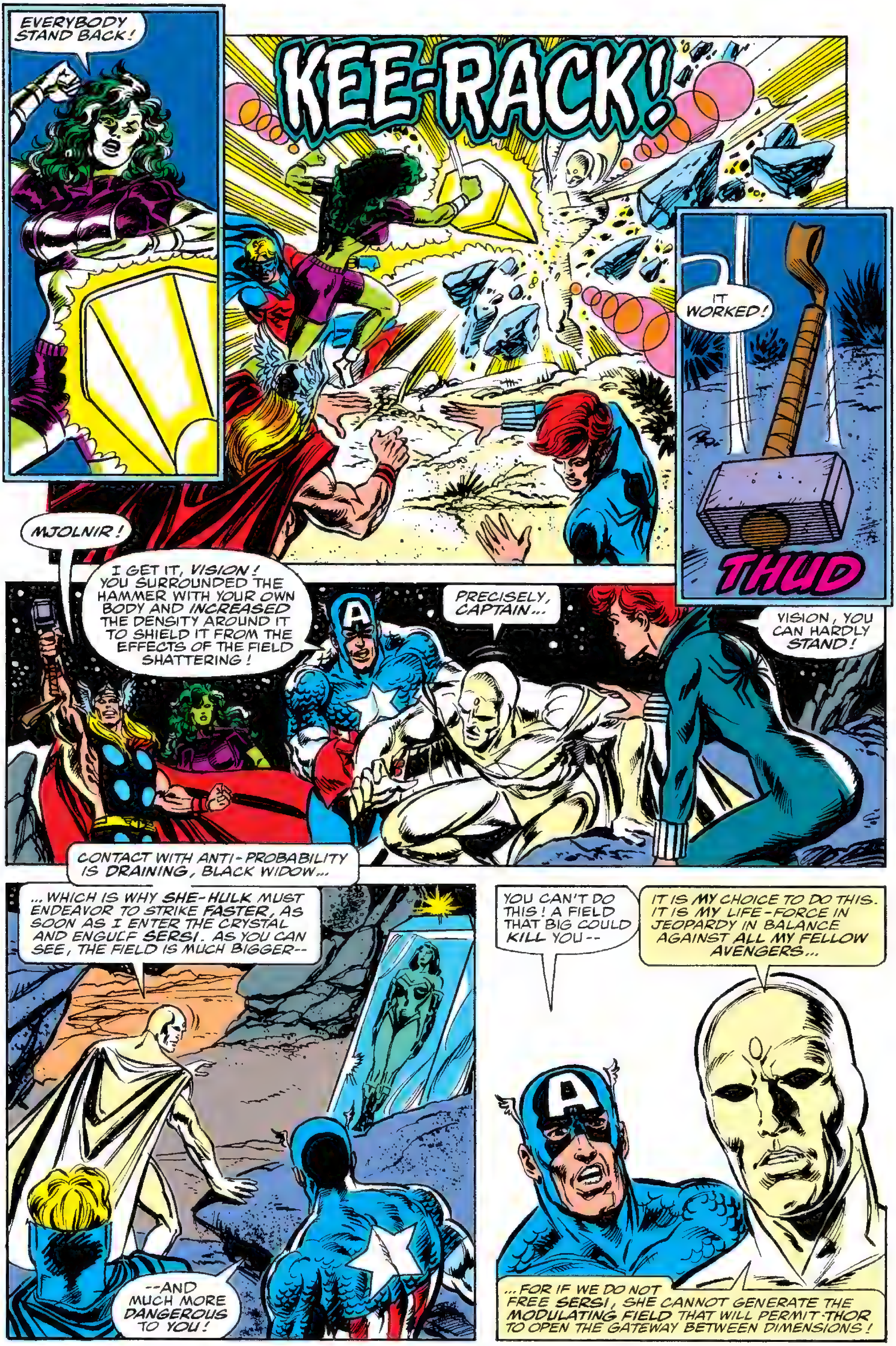
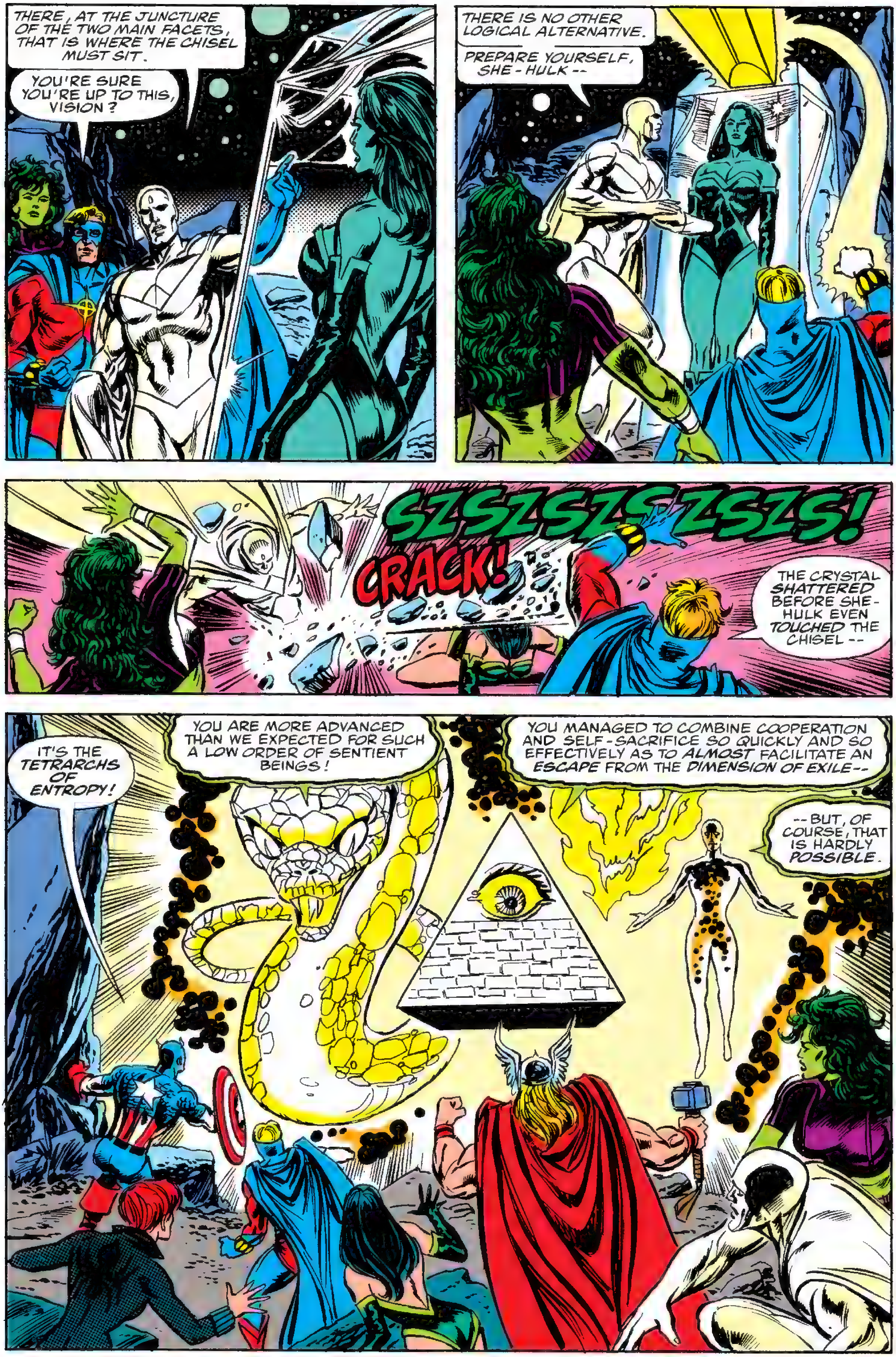
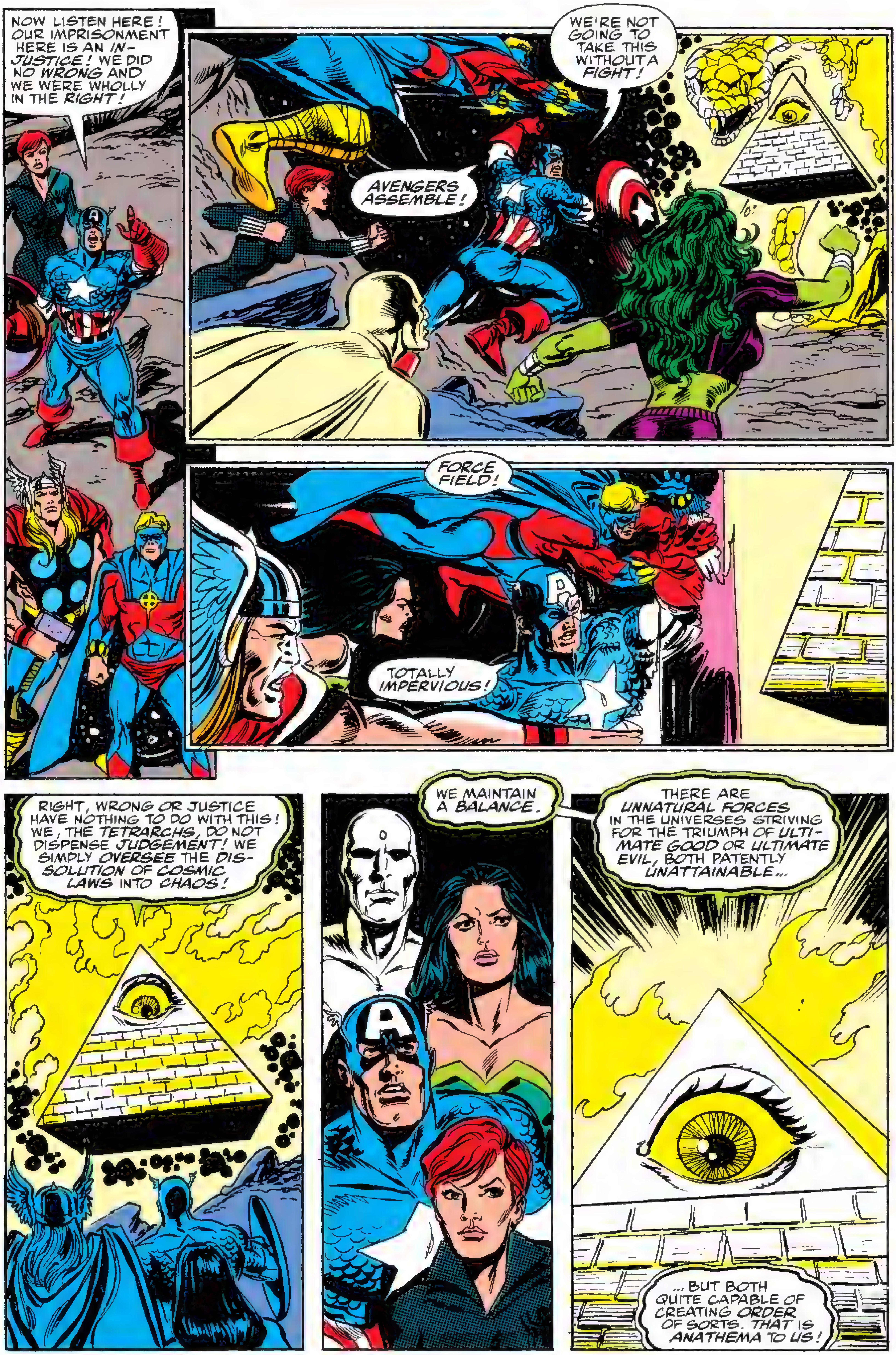
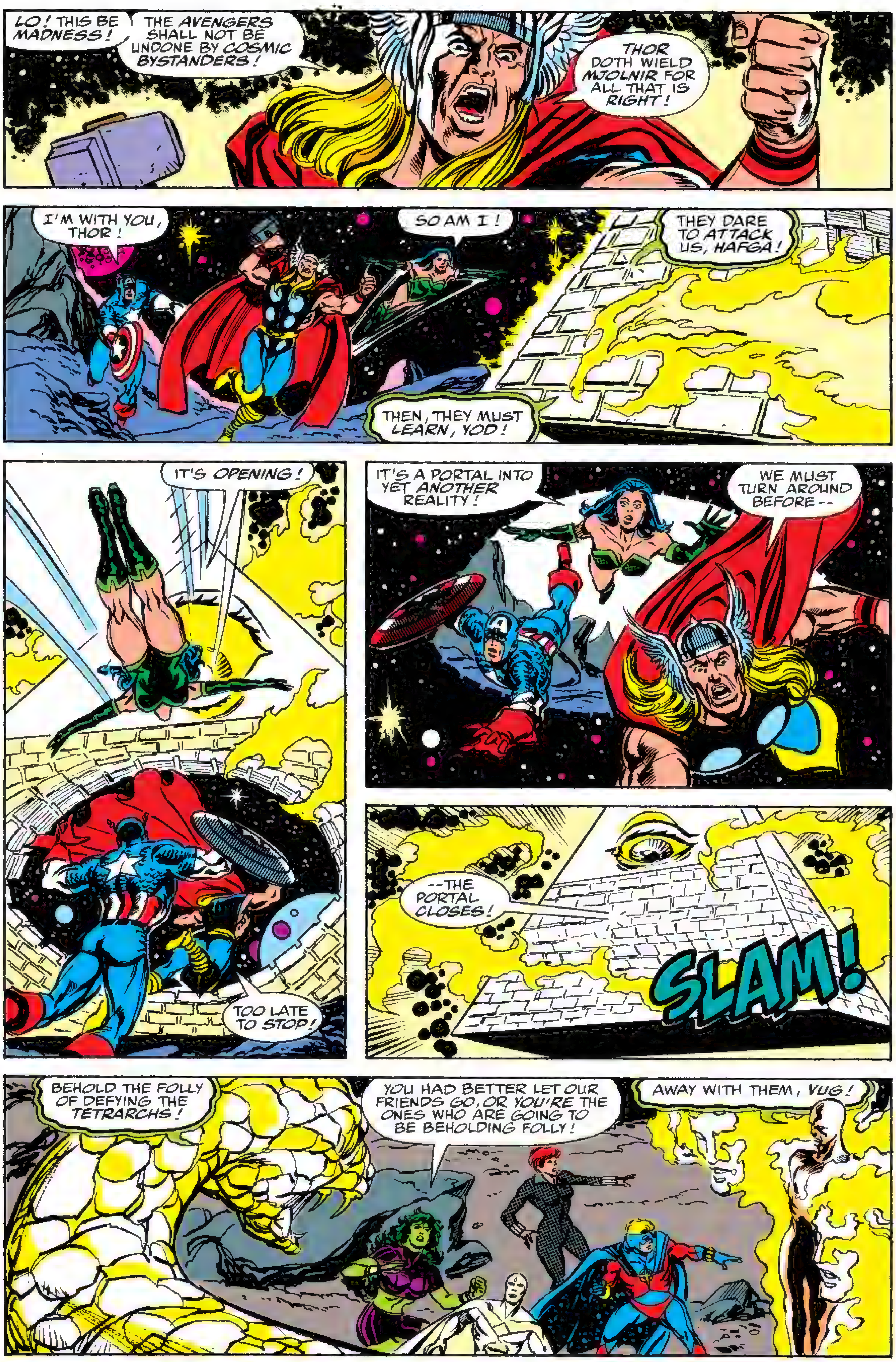

IF ONLY MY MIGHTY URU MALLET WERE FREE!
THAT IS JUST THE FIRST PHASE OF A WORKABLE SOLUTION AND BY ITSELF, WELL WITHIN THE PARAMETERS OF FEASIBLE POSSIBILITIES.
YOU MEAN, STEP #1 IS FREEING MJOLNIR?
PRECISELY, SHE-HULK...
...BUT FIRST, I MUST DETERMINE THE EXACT NATURE OF THE SEEMINGLY CRYSTALLINE--
--IT'S NOT CRYSTAL!
IT IS A SOLID FIELD OF ANTI-PROBABILITY!
A STASIS FIELD THAT NEGATES ALL OF WHAT WE CALL MAGIC, BUT WHAT WE REALLY KNOW TO BE THE PSIONIC MANIPULATION OF PROBABILITY!
IT EXTENDS INTO THE HAMMER ITSELF, PERMEATING ITS ESSENCE. IF WE WERE TO SHATTER THE FIELD, MJOLNIR MIGHT WELL BE DESTROYED AS WELL!
MJOLNIR UNMADE?
MJOLNIR DOTH BE A PRIMAL ARTIFACT, ENDOWED BY ODIN HIMSELF WITH POWERFUL ENCHANTMENTS!
THE CONSEQUENCES OF IT BEING UNMADE ARE UNTHINKABLE AND CATACLYSMIC!

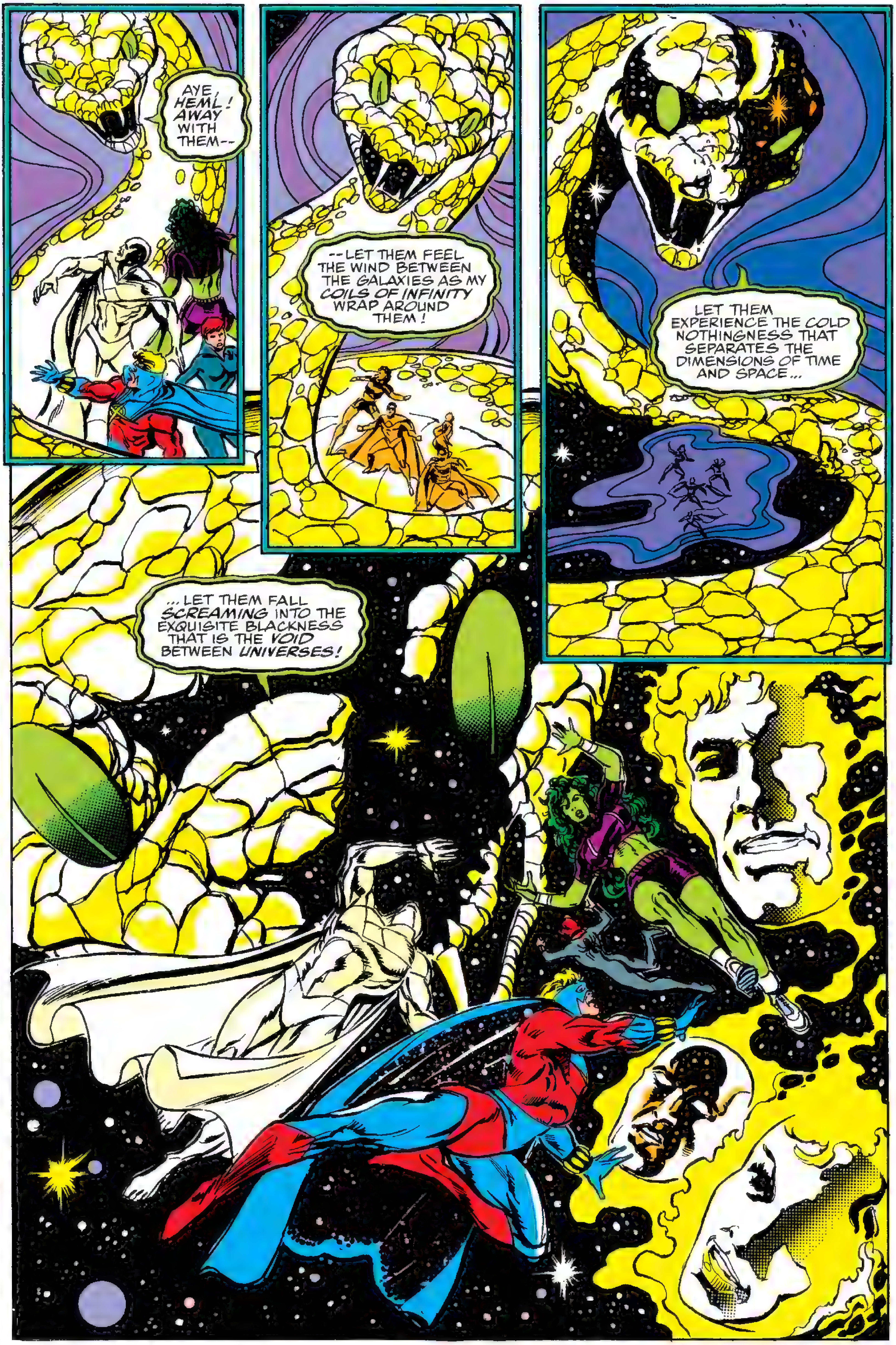

FREEING MJOLNIR IS THE ONLY WAY TO FREE SERSI. THE RISK IS HIGH, SO THE DECISION MUST BE UP TO THOR.
'TIS SERSI'S LIFE AT STAKE, VISION -- DO WHAT THOU MUST!
VERY WELL. QUASAR, I AM IN NEED OF YOUR QUANTUM BANDS!
COMING RIGHT UP!
I WANT A GIANT CHISEL WITH THE CUTTING EDGE RESTING ALONG THAT FAULT IN THE MAIN FACET--
YOU GOT IT, BUT I THOUGHT YOU SAID THIS WAS ANTI-PROBABILITY AND NOT CRYSTAL?
WHEN IT MANIFESTS ITSELF IN CRYSTALLINE FORM IT ASSUMES THE PROPERTIES OF CRYSTAL.
SHE-HULK, ARE YOU PREPARED TO STRIKE THE CHISEL WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH?
I'LL GIVE IT MY BEST SHOT!
STAND READY, WHILE I LOWER MY DENSITY SO THAT I MAY PASS INTO THE CRYSTAL AND SURROUND MJOLNIR...
...NOW, SHE-HULK! STRIKE!

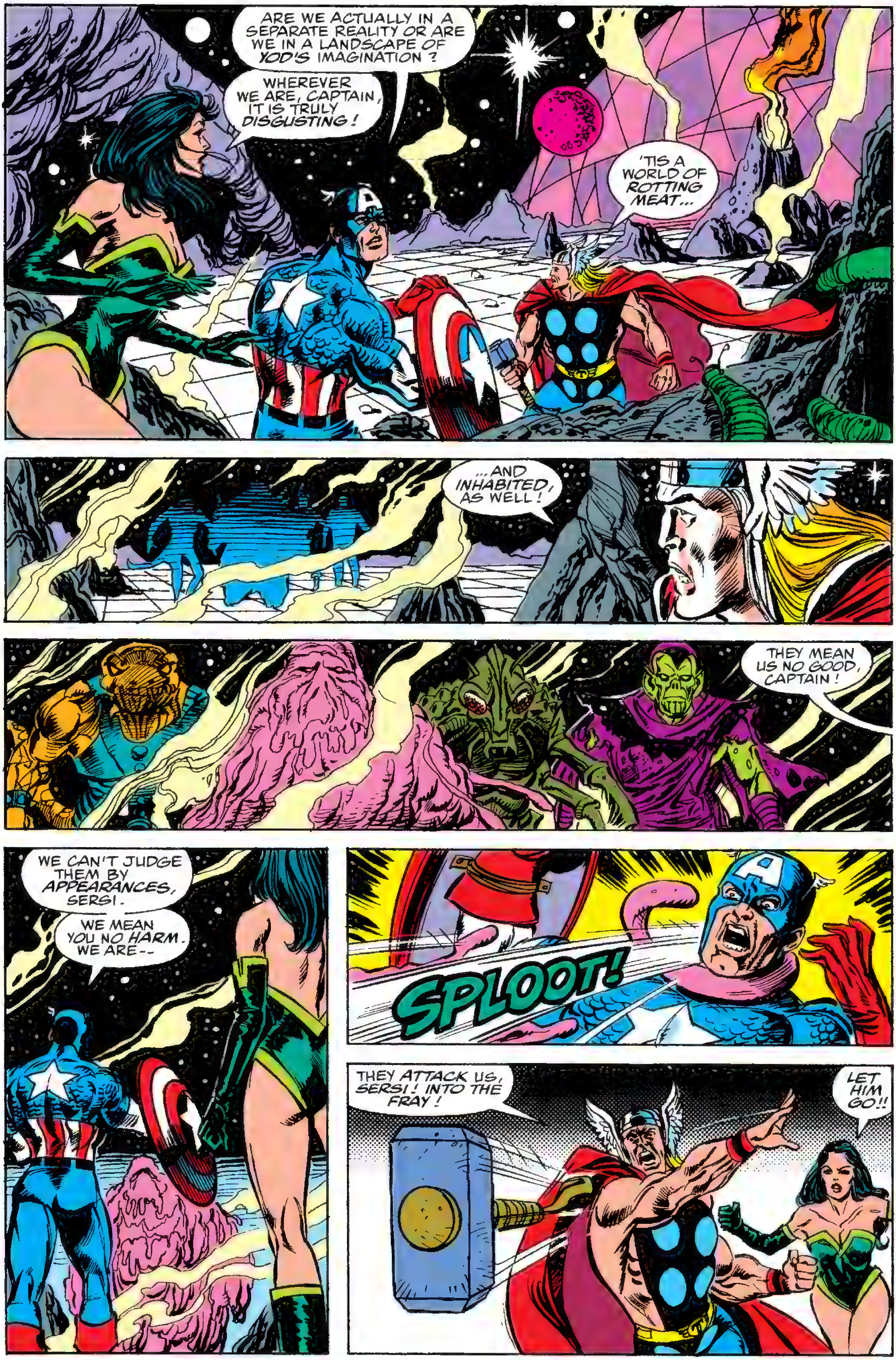

EVERYBODY STAND BACK!
KEE-RACK!
IT WORKED!
THUD
MJOLNIR!
I GET IT, VISION! YOU SURROUNDED THE HAMMER WITH YOUR OWN BODY AND INCREASED THE DENSITY AROUND IT TO SHIELD IT FROM THE EFFECTS OF THE FIELD SHATTERING!
PRECISELY, CAPTAIN...
VISION, YOU CAN HARDLY STAND!
CONTACT WITH ANTI-PROBABILITY IS DRAINING, BLACK WIDOW...
...WHICH IS WHY SHE-HULK MUST ENDEAVOR TO STRIKE FASTER, AS SOON AS I ENTER THE CRYSTAL AND ENGULF SERSI. AS YOU CAN SEE, THE FIELD IS MUCH BIGGER--
--AND MUCH MORE DANGEROUS TO YOU!
YOU CAN'T DO THIS! A FIELD THAT BIG COULD KILL YOU--
IT IS MY CHOICE TO DO THIS. IT IS MY LIFE-FORCE IN JEOPARDY IN BALANCE AGAINST ALL MY FELLOW AVENGERS...
...FOR IF WE DO NOT FREE SERSI, SHE CANNOT GENERATE THE MODULATING FIELD THAT WILL PERMIT THOR TO OPEN THE GATEWAY BETWEEN DIMENSIONS!

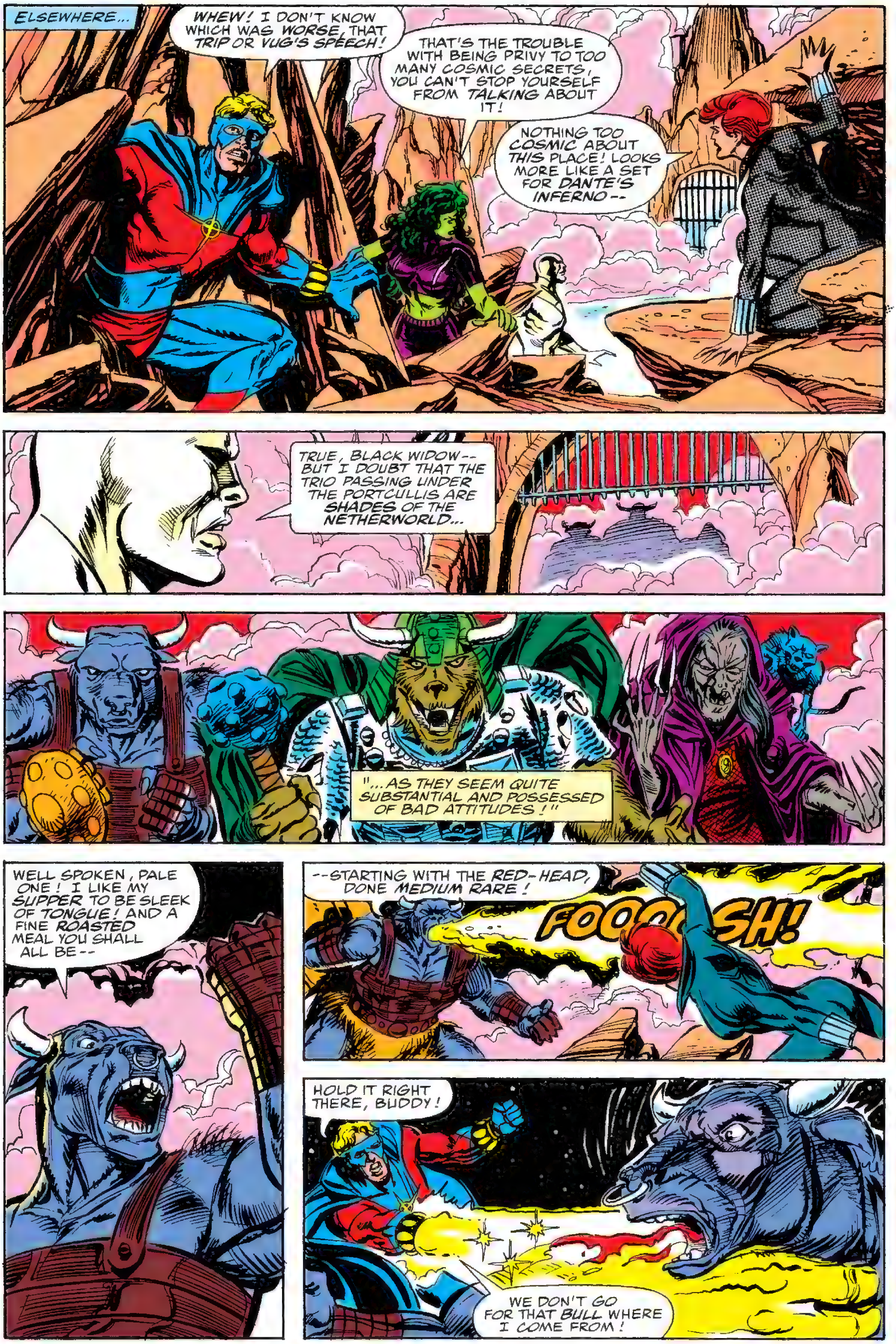

THERE, AT THE JUNCTURE OF THE TWO MAIN FACETS, THAT IS WHERE THE CHISEL MUST SIT.
YOU'RE SURE YOU'RE UP TO THIS, VISION?
THERE IS NO OTHER LOGICAL ALTERNATIVE.
PREPARE YOURSELF, SHE-HULK --
SZSZSZSZSZSZS!
CRACK!
THE CRYSTAL *SHATTERED* BEFORE SHE-HULK EVEN *TOUCHED* THE CHISEL --
IT'S THE *TETRARCHS OF ENTROPY!*
YOU ARE MORE ADVANCED THAN WE EXPECTED FOR SUCH A LOW ORDER OF SENTIENT BEINGS!
YOU MANAGED TO COMBINE COOPERATION AND SELF-SACRIFICE SO QUICKLY AND SO EFFECTIVELY AS TO *ALMOST* FACILITATE AN *ESCAPE* FROM THE *DIMENSION OF EXILE*--
-- BUT, OF COURSE, THAT IS HARDLY *POSSIBLE*.

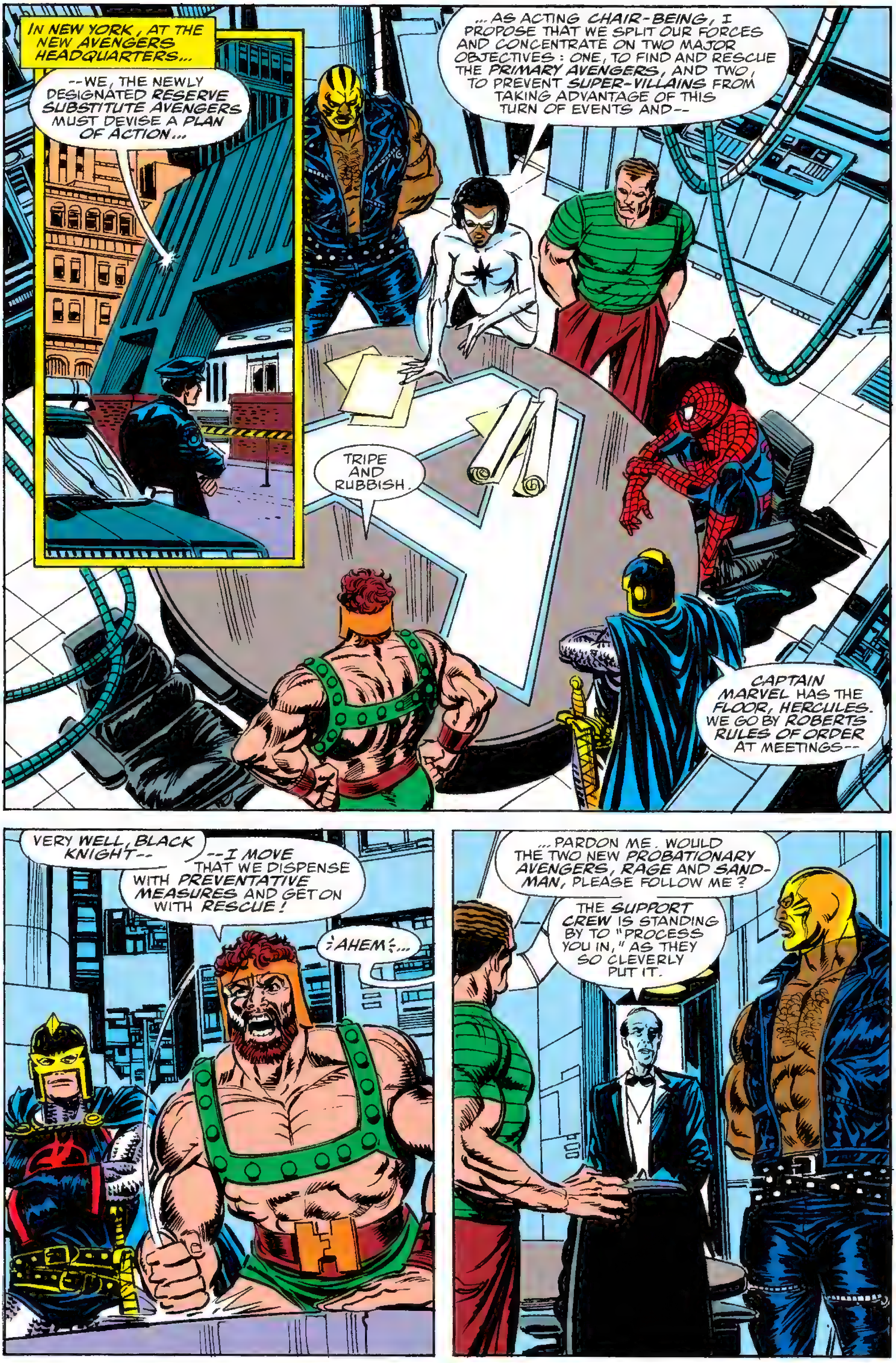

NOW LISTEN HERE! OUR IMPRISONMENT HERE IS AN INJUSTICE! WE DID NO WRONG AND WE WERE WHOLLY IN THE RIGHT!
WE'RE NOT GOING TO TAKE THIS WITHOUT A FIGHT!
AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!
FORCE FIELD!
TOTALLY IMPERVIOUS!
RIGHT, WRONG OR JUSTICE HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS! WE, THE TETRARCHS, DO NOT DISPENSE JUDGEMENT! WE SIMPLY OVERSEE THE DISSOLUTION OF COSMIC LAWS INTO CHAOS!
WE MAINTAIN A BALANCE.
THERE ARE UNNATURAL FORCES IN THE UNIVERSES STRIVING FOR THE TRIUMPH OF ULTIMATE GOOD OR ULTIMATE EVIL, BOTH PATENTLY UNATTAINABLE...
...BUT BOTH QUITE CAPABLE OF CREATING ORDER OF SORTS. THAT IS ANATHEMA TO US!

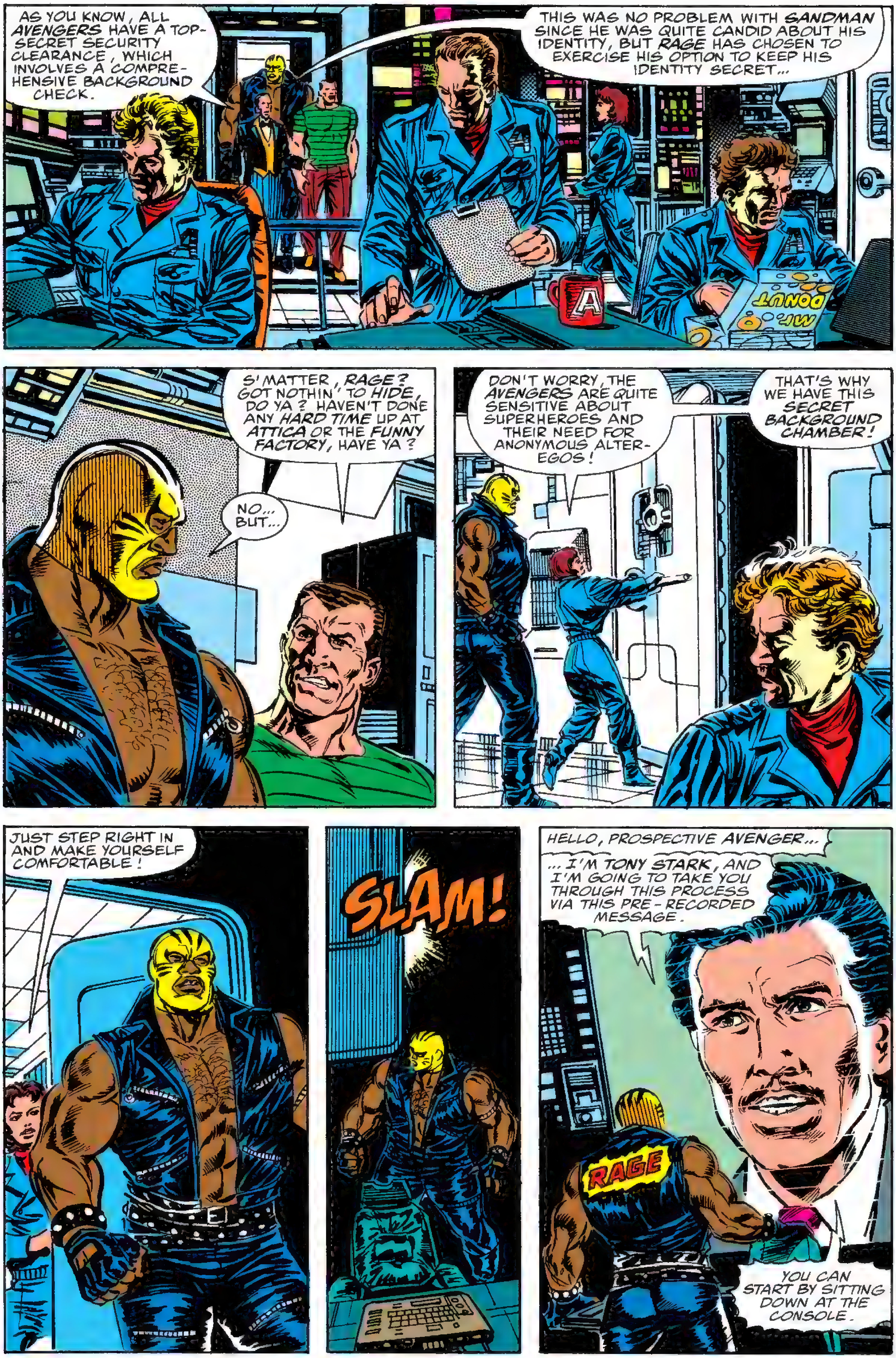

LO! THIS BE MADNESS!
THE AVENGERS SHALL NOT BE UNDONE BY COSMIC BYSTANDERS!
THOR DOTH WIELD MJOLNIR FOR ALL THAT IS RIGHT!
I'M WITH YOU, THOR!
SO AM I!
THEY DARE TO ATTACK US, HAFGA!
THEN, THEY MUST LEARN, YOD!
IT'S OPENING!
TOO LATE TO STOP!
IT'S A PORTAL INTO YET ANOTHER REALITY!
WE MUST TURN AROUND BEFORE--
--THE PORTAL CLOSES!
SLAM!
BEHOLD THE FOLLY OF DEFYING THE TETRARCHS!
YOU HAD BETTER LET OUR FRIENDS GO, OR YOU'RE THE ONES WHO ARE GOING TO BE BEHOLDING FOLLY!
AWAY WITH THEM, VUG!

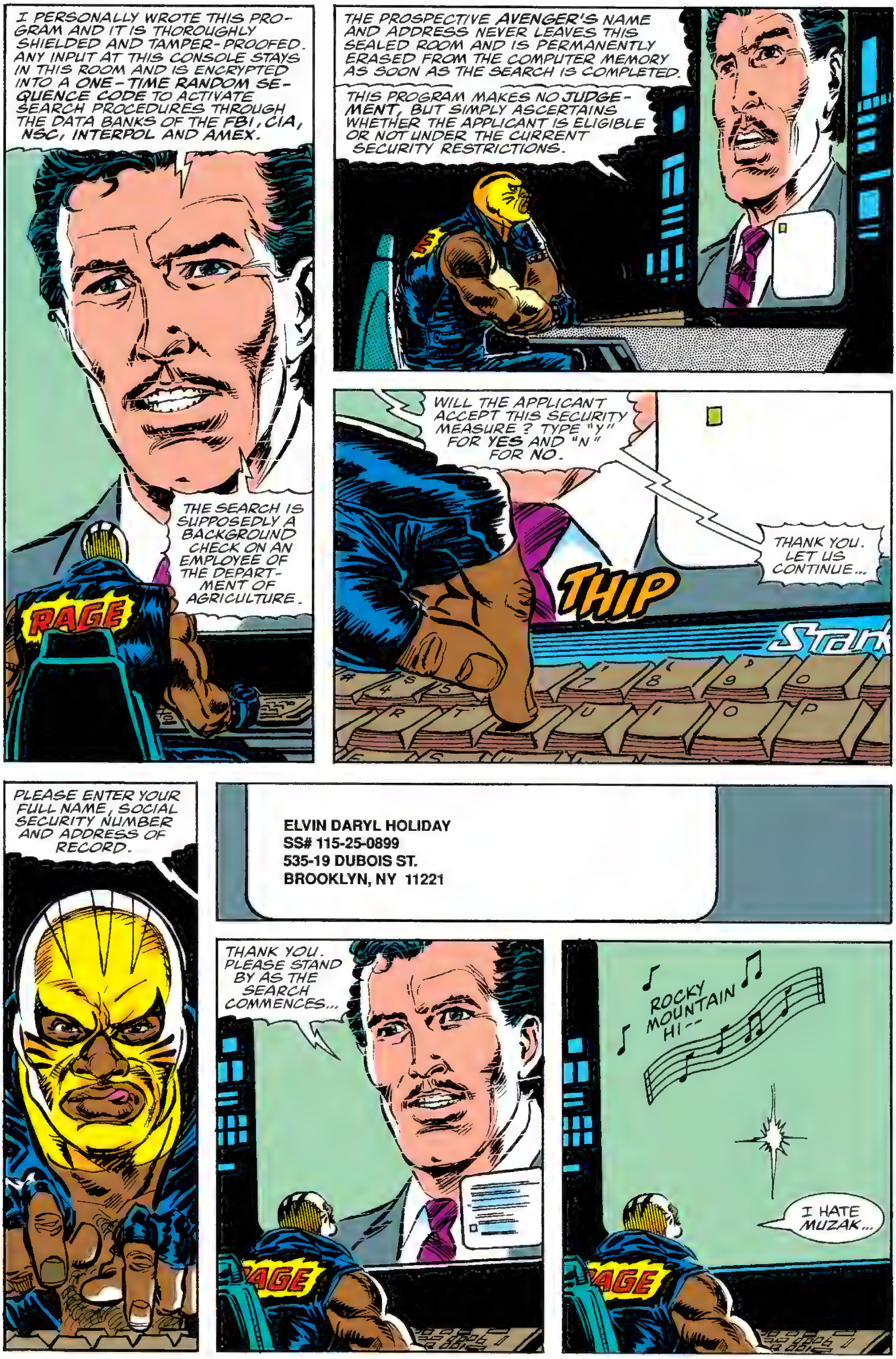

AYE, HEML! AWAY WITH THEM--
--LET THEM FEEL THE WIND BETWEEN THE GALAXIES AS MY COILS OF INFINITY WRAP AROUND THEM!
LET THEM EXPERIENCE THE COLD NOTHINGNESS THAT SEPARATES THE DIMENSIONS OF TIME AND SPACE...
...LET THEM FALL SCREAMING INTO THE EXQUISITE BLACKNESS THAT IS THE VOID BETWEEN UNIVERSES!

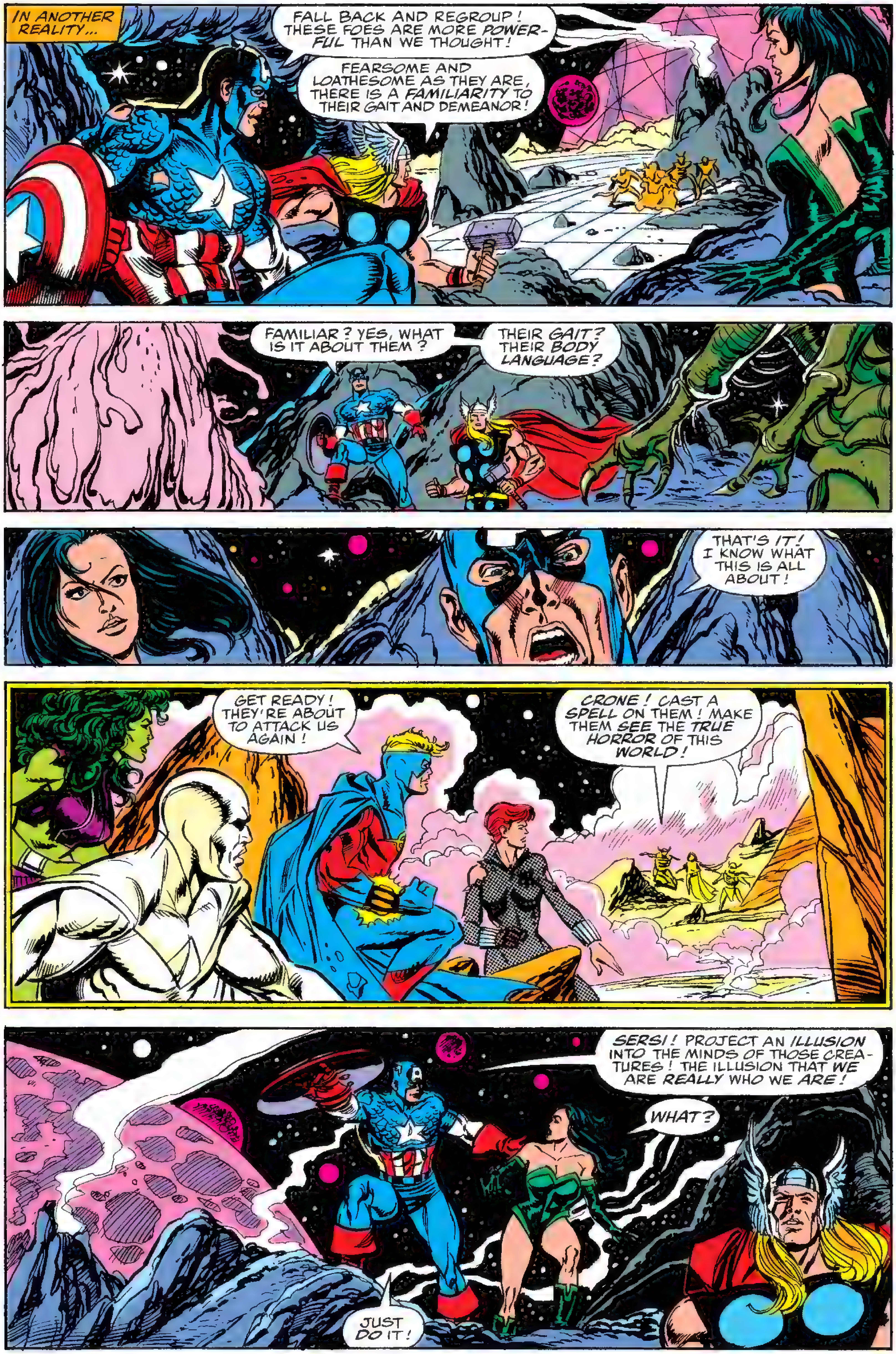

ARE WE ACTUALLY IN A SEPARATE REALITY OR ARE WE IN A LANDSCAPE OF *YOD'S* IMAGINATION ?
WHEREVER WE ARE, CAPTAIN, IT IS TRULY *DISGUSTING !*
'TIS A WORLD OF *ROTTING MEAT...*
...AND *INHABITED,* AS WELL !
THEY MEAN US NO GOOD, CAPTAIN !
WE CAN'T JUDGE THEM BY *APPEARANCES,* SERSI.
WE MEAN YOU NO *HARM.* WE ARE--
SPLOOT!
THEY *ATTACK* US, SERSI ! INTO THE FRAY !
LET HIM GO!!

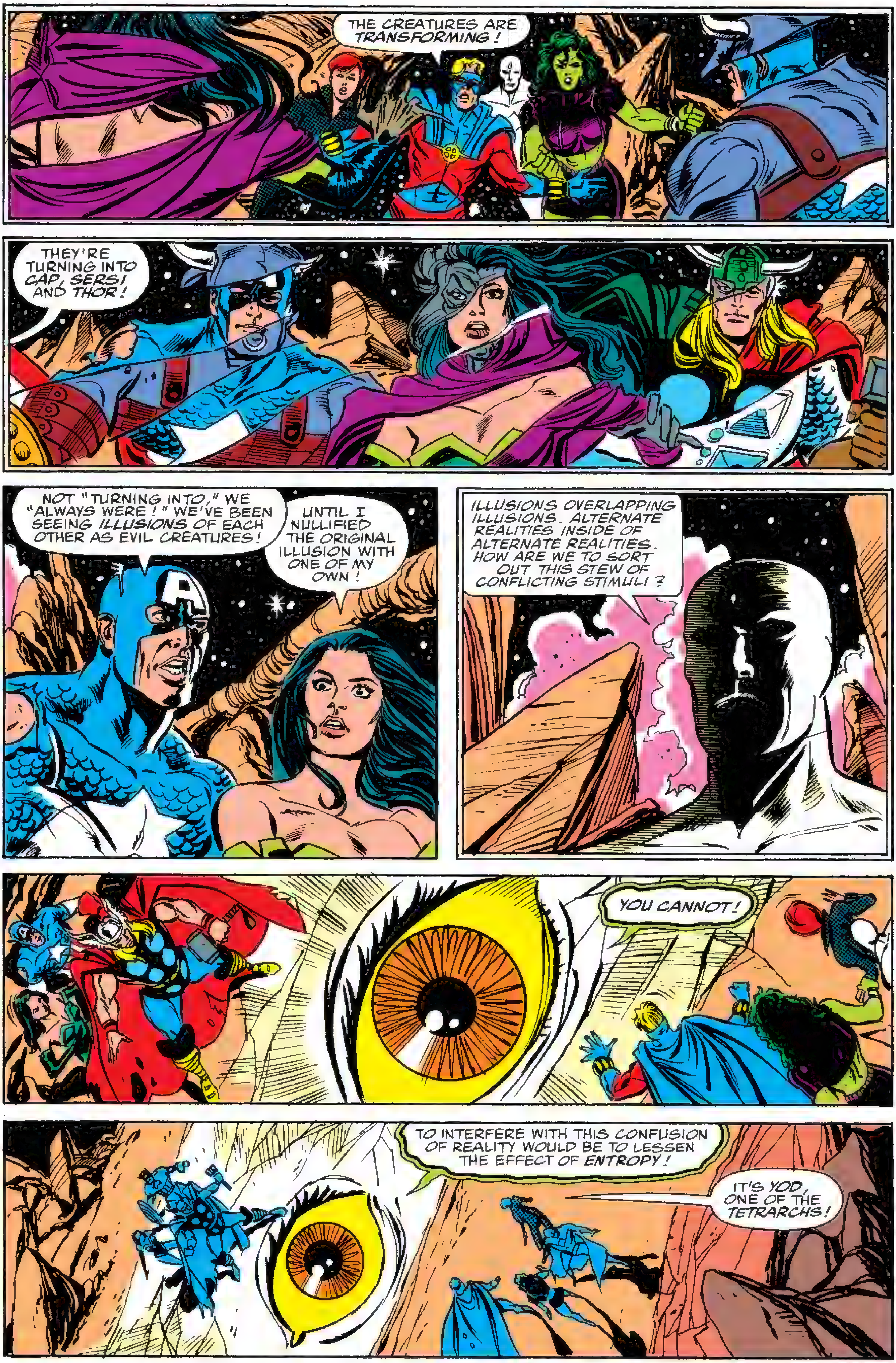

ELSEWHERE...
WHEW! I DON'T KNOW WHICH WAS WORSE, THAT TRIP OR VUG'S SPEECH!
THAT'S THE TROUBLE WITH BEING PRIVY TO TOO MANY COSMIC SECRETS, YOU CAN'T STOP YOURSELF FROM TALKING ABOUT IT!
NOTHING TOO COSMIC ABOUT THIS PLACE! LOOKS MORE LIKE A SET FOR DANTE'S INFERNO--
TRUE, BLACK WIDOW-- BUT I DOUBT THAT THE TRIO PASSING UNDER THE PORTCULLIS ARE SHADES OF THE NETHERWORLD...
"...AS THEY SEEM QUITE SUBSTANTIAL AND POSSESSED OF BAD ATTITUDES!"
WELL SPOKEN, PALE ONE! I LIKE MY SUPPER TO BE SLEEK OF TONGUE! AND A FINE ROASTED MEAL YOU SHALL ALL BE--
--STARTING WITH THE RED-HEAD, DONE MEDIUM RARE!
FOOOOSH!
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, BUDDY!
WE DON'T GO FOR THAT BULL WHERE I COME FROM!

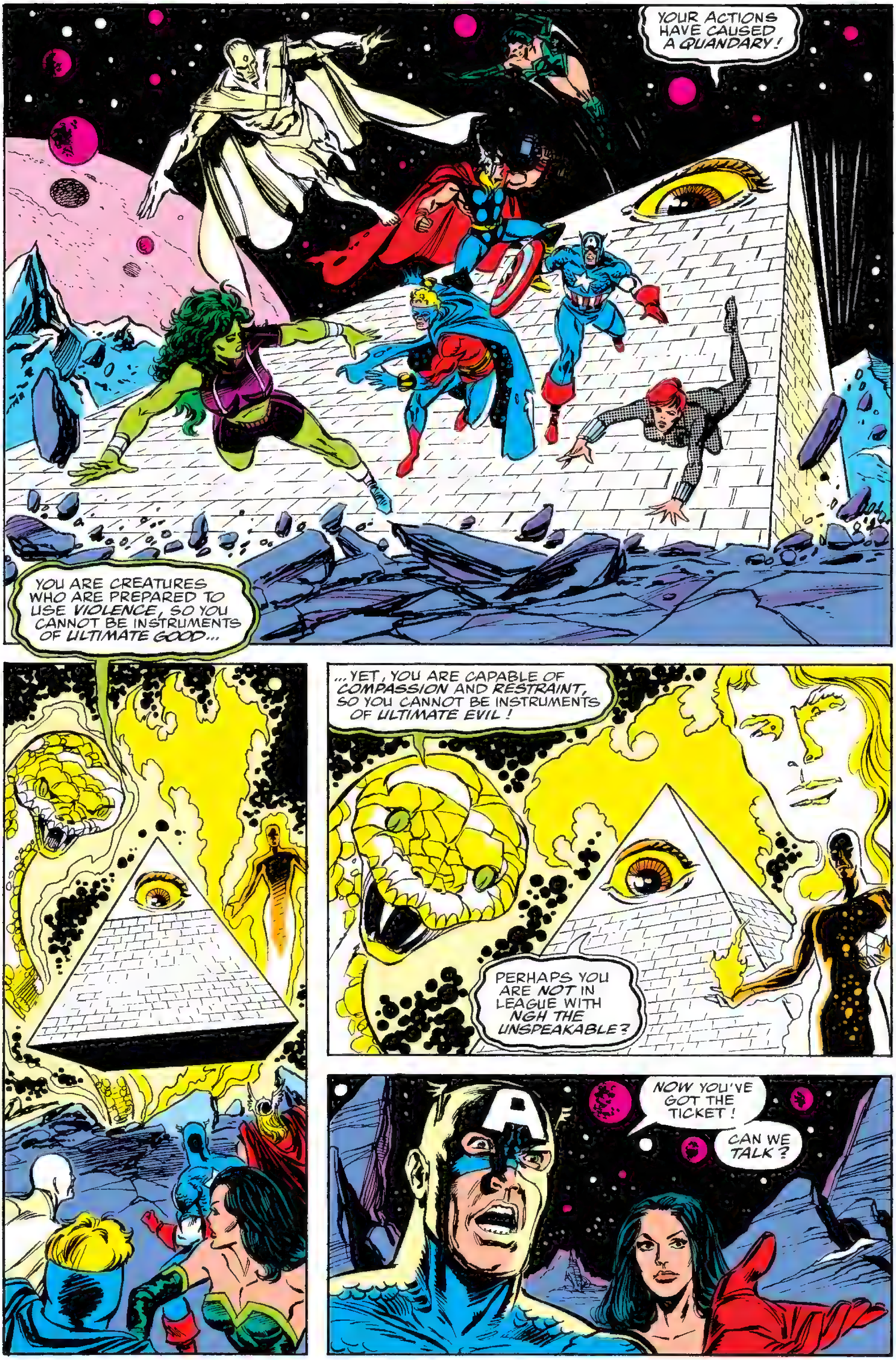

IN NEW YORK, AT THE NEW AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS...
--WE, THE NEWLY DESIGNATED RESERVE SUBSTITUTE AVENGERS MUST DEVISE A PLAN OF ACTION...
...AS ACTING CHAIR-BEING, I PROPOSE THAT WE SPLIT OUR FORCES AND CONCENTRATE ON TWO MAJOR OBJECTIVES: ONE, TO FIND AND RESCUE THE PRIMARY AVENGERS, AND TWO, TO PREVENT SUPER-VILLAINS FROM TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THIS TURN OF EVENTS AND--
TRIPE AND RUBBISH.
CAPTAIN MARVEL HAS THE FLOOR, HERCULES. WE GO BY ROBERTS RULES OF ORDER AT MEETINGS--
VERY WELL, BLACK KNIGHT--
--I MOVE THAT WE DISPENSE WITH PREVENTATIVE MEASURES AND GET ON WITH RESCUE!
¿AHEM¿...
...PARDON ME. WOULD THE TWO NEW PROBATIONARY AVENGERS, RAGE AND SANDMAN, PLEASE FOLLOW ME?
THE SUPPORT CREW IS STANDING BY TO "PROCESS YOU IN," AS THEY SO CLEVERLY PUT IT.

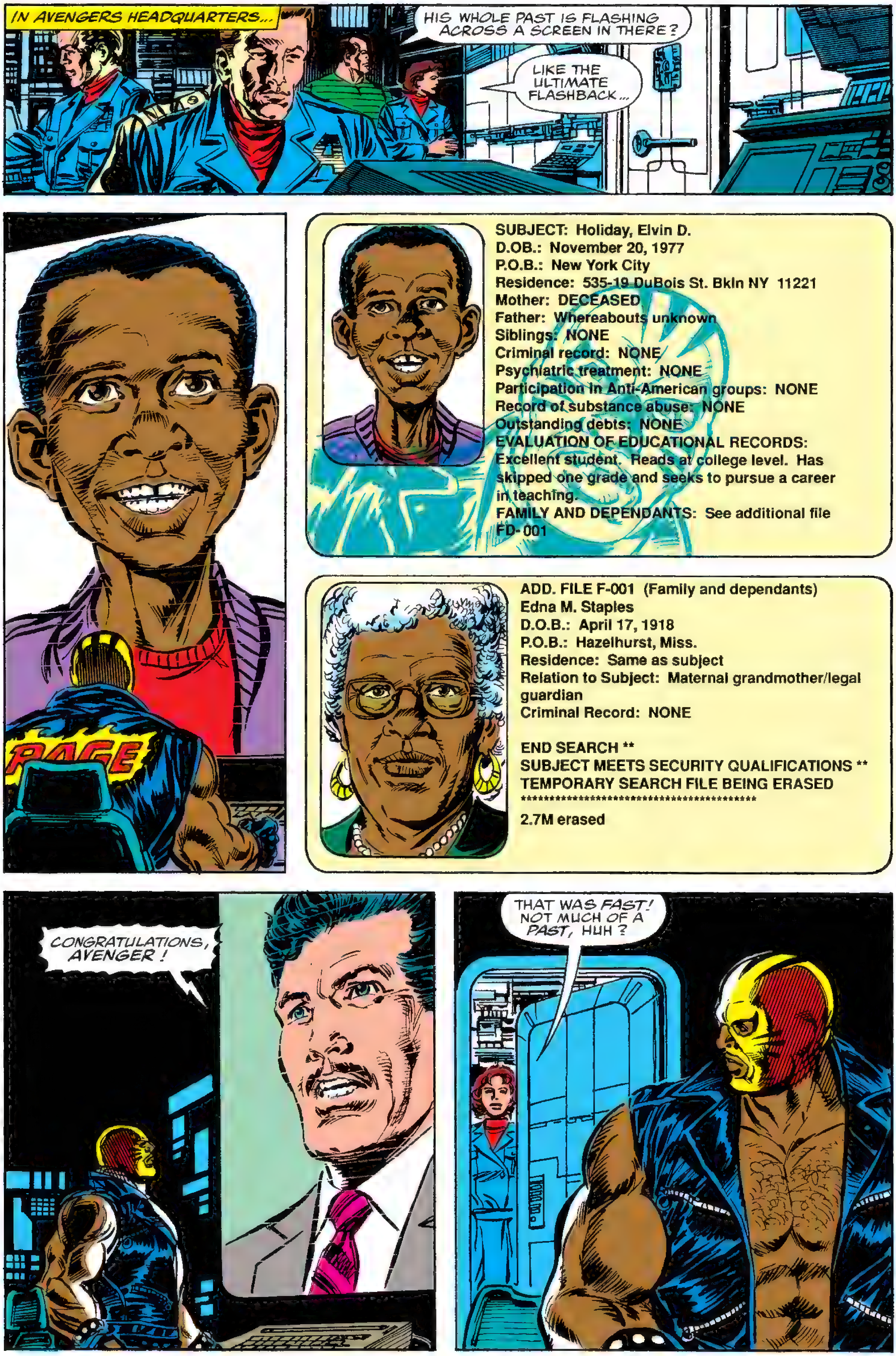

AS YOU KNOW, ALL AVENGERS HAVE A TOP-SECRET SECURITY CLEARANCE, WHICH INVOLVES A COMPREHENSIVE BACKGROUND CHECK.
THIS WAS NO PROBLEM WITH SANDMAN SINCE HE WAS QUITE CANDID ABOUT HIS IDENTITY, BUT RAGE HAS CHOSEN TO EXERCISE HIS OPTION TO KEEP HIS IDENTITY SECRET...
A
MR. DONUT
S'MATTER, RAGE? GOT NOTHIN' TO HIDE, DO YA? HAVEN'T DONE ANY HARD TIME UP AT ATTICA OR THE FUNNY FACTORY, HAVE YA?
NO... BUT...
DON'T WORRY, THE AVENGERS ARE QUITE SENSITIVE ABOUT SUPERHEROES AND THEIR NEED FOR ANONYMOUS ALTER-EGOS!
THAT'S WHY WE HAVE THIS SECRET BACKGROUND CHAMBER!
JUST STEP RIGHT IN AND MAKE YOURSELF COMFORTABLE!
SLAM!
HELLO, PROSPECTIVE AVENGER...
...I'M TONY STARK, AND I'M GOING TO TAKE YOU THROUGH THIS PROCESS VIA THIS PRE-RECORDED MESSAGE.
RAGE
YOU CAN START BY SITTING DOWN AT THE CONSOLE.


I PERSONALLY WROTE THIS PROGRAM AND IT IS THOROUGHLY SHIELDED AND TAMPER-PROOFED. ANY INPUT AT THIS CONSOLE STAYS IN THIS ROOM AND IS ENCRYPTED INTO A ONE-TIME RANDOM SEQUENCE CODE TO ACTIVATE SEARCH PROCEDURES THROUGH THE DATA BANKS OF THE FBI, CIA, NSC, INTERPOL AND AMEX.
THE SEARCH IS SUPPOSEDLY A BACKGROUND CHECK ON AN EMPLOYEE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.
RAGE
THE PROSPECTIVE AVENGER'S NAME AND ADDRESS NEVER LEAVES THIS SEALED ROOM AND IS PERMANENTLY ERASED FROM THE COMPUTER MEMORY AS SOON AS THE SEARCH IS COMPLETED.
THIS PROGRAM MAKES NO JUDGEMENT, BUT SIMPLY ASCERTAINS WHETHER THE APPLICANT IS ELIGIBLE OR NOT UNDER THE CURRENT SECURITY RESTRICTIONS.
WILL THE APPLICANT ACCEPT THIS SECURITY MEASURE? TYPE "Y" FOR YES AND "N" FOR NO.
THIP
THANK YOU. LET US CONTINUE...
Stark
PLEASE ENTER YOUR FULL NAME, SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER AND ADDRESS OF RECORD.
ELVIN DARYL HOLIDAY
SS# 115-25-0899
535-19 DUBOIS ST.
BROOKLYN, NY 11221
THANK YOU. PLEASE STAND BY AS THE SEARCH COMMENCES...
AGE
ROCKY MOUNTAIN HI--
I HATE MUZAK...
AGE


IN ANOTHER REALITY...
FALL BACK AND REGROUP! THESE FOES ARE MORE *POWERFUL* THAN WE THOUGHT!
FEARSOME AND LOATHESOME AS THEY ARE, THERE IS A *FAMILIARITY* TO THEIR GAIT AND DEMEANOR!
FAMILIAR? YES, WHAT IS IT ABOUT THEM?
THEIR *GAIT*? THEIR *BODY LANGUAGE*?
THAT'S *IT*! I KNOW WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT!
GET READY! THEY'RE ABOUT TO ATTACK US AGAIN!
CRONE! CAST A SPELL ON THEM! MAKE THEM *SEE* THE *TRUE HORROR* OF THIS *WORLD!*
SERSI! PROJECT AN *ILLUSION* INTO THE MINDS OF THOSE CREATURES! THE ILLUSION THAT *WE* ARE *REALLY* WHO WE *ARE*!
WHAT?
JUST *DO* IT!


THE CREATURES ARE *TRANSFORMING!*
THEY'RE TURNING INTO *CAP, SERSI* AND *THOR!*
NOT "TURNING INTO," WE "ALWAYS WERE!" WE'VE BEEN SEEING *ILLUSIONS* OF EACH OTHER AS EVIL CREATURES!
UNTIL I NULLIFIED THE ORIGINAL ILLUSION WITH ONE OF MY OWN!
ILLUSIONS OVERLAPPING ILLUSIONS. ALTERNATE REALITIES INSIDE OF ALTERNATE REALITIES. HOW ARE WE TO SORT OUT THIS STEW OF CONFLICTING STIMULI?
YOU CANNOT!
TO INTERFERE WITH THIS CONFUSION OF REALITY WOULD BE TO LESSEN THE EFFECT OF *ENTROPY!*
IT'S *YOD,* ONE OF THE *TETRARCHS!*


YOUR ACTIONS HAVE CAUSED A QUANDARY!
YOU ARE CREATURES WHO ARE PREPARED TO USE VIOLENCE, SO YOU CANNOT BE INSTRUMENTS OF ULTIMATE GOOD...
...YET, YOU ARE CAPABLE OF COMPASSION AND RESTRAINT, SO YOU CANNOT BE INSTRUMENTS OF ULTIMATE EVIL!
PERHAPS YOU ARE NOT IN LEAGUE WITH NGH THE UNSPEAKABLE?
NOW YOU'VE GOT THE TICKET!
CAN WE TALK?



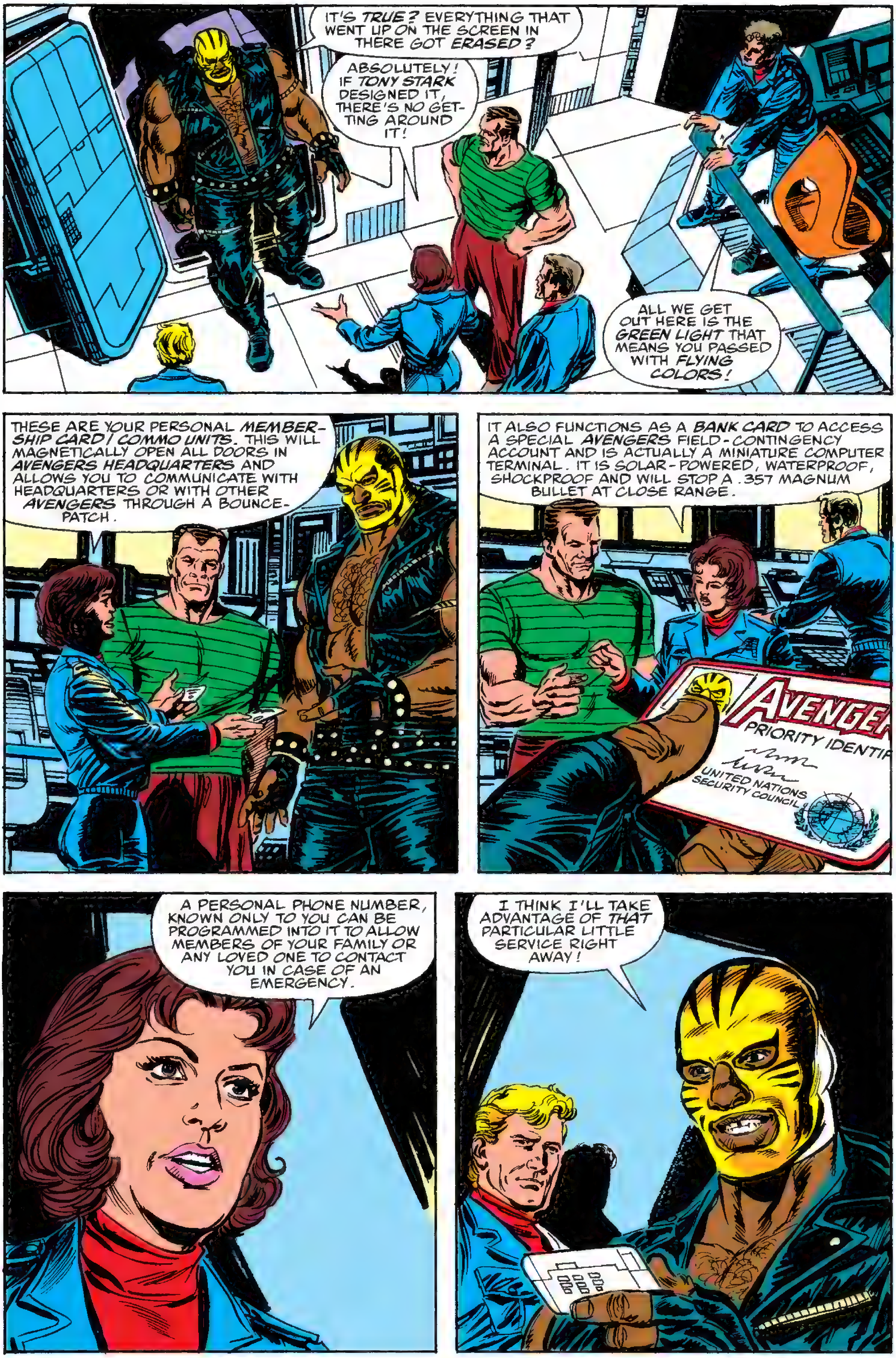
IN AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS...
HIS WHOLE PAST IS FLASHING ACROSS A SCREEN IN THERE?
LIKE THE ULTIMATE FLASHBACK...
RAGE

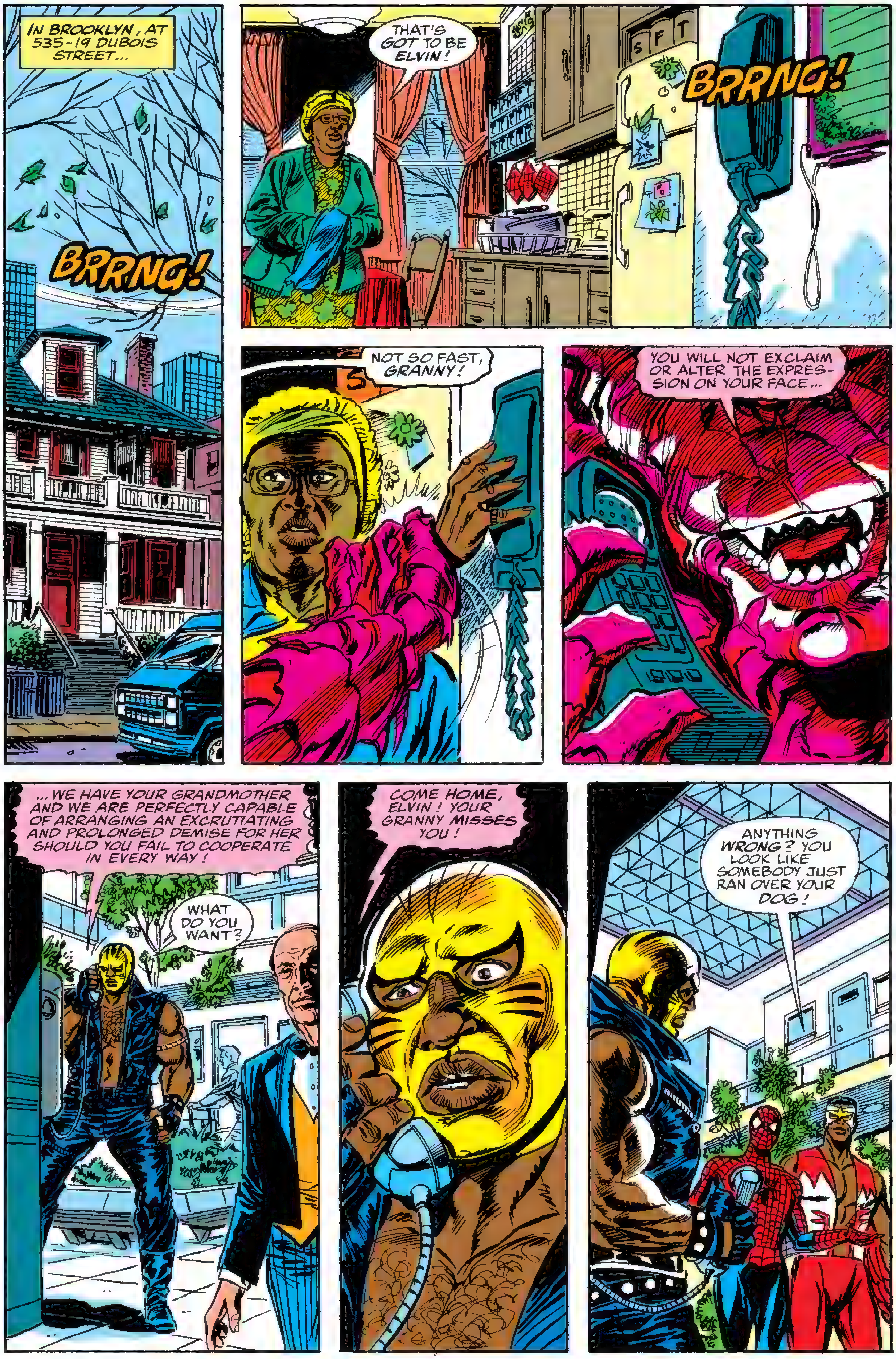
SUBJECT: Holiday, Elvin D.
D.OB.: November 20, 1977
P.O.B.: New York City
Residence: 535-19 DuBois St. Bkln NY 11221
Mother: DECEASED
Father: Whereabouts unknown
Siblings: NONE
Criminal record: NONE
Psychiatric treatment: NONE
Participation in Anti-American groups: NONE
Record of substance abuse: NONE
Outstanding debts: NONE
EVALUATION OF EDUCATIONAL RECORDS: Excellent student. Reads at college level. Has skipped one grade and seeks to pursue a career in teaching.
FAMILY AND DEPENDANTS: See additional file FD-001

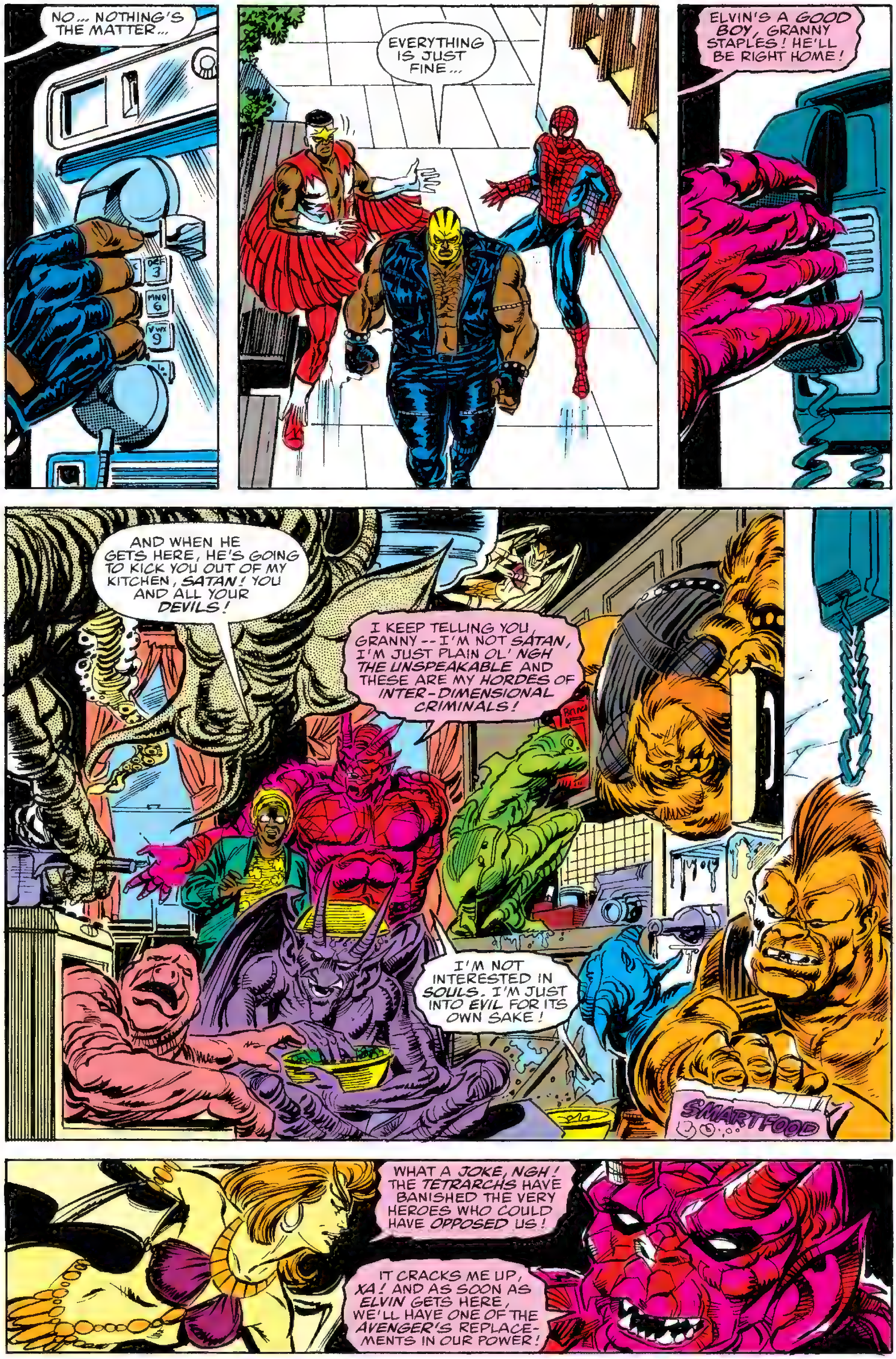
ADD. FILE F-001 (Family and dependants)
Edna M. Staples
D.O.B.: April 17, 1918
P.O.B.: Hazelhurst, Miss.
Residence: Same as subject
Relation to Subject: Maternal grandmother/legal guardian
Criminal Record: NONE

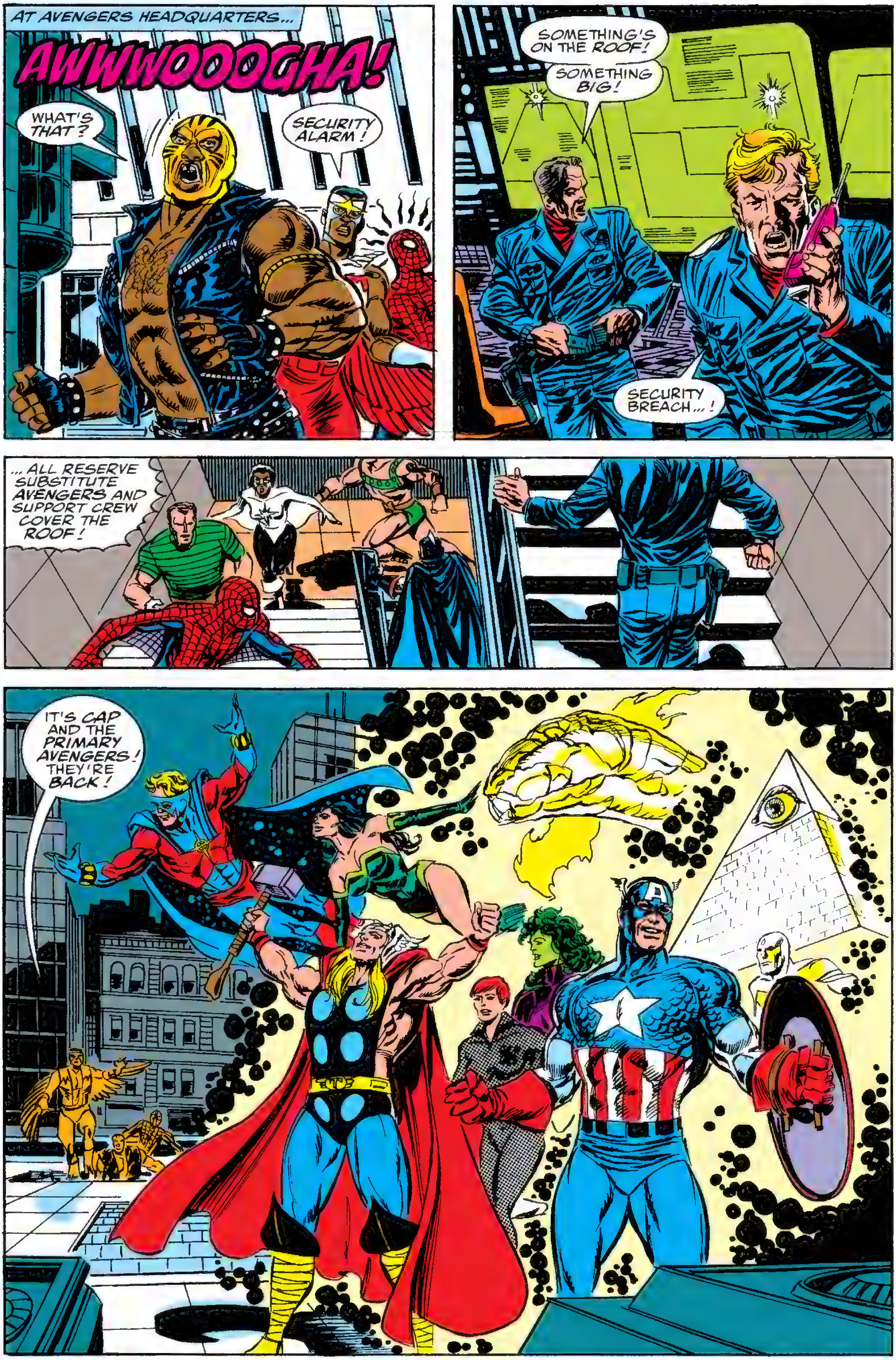
END SEARCH **
SUBJECT MEETS SECURITY QUALIFICATIONS **
TEMPORARY SEARCH FILE BEING ERASED
****
2.7M erased

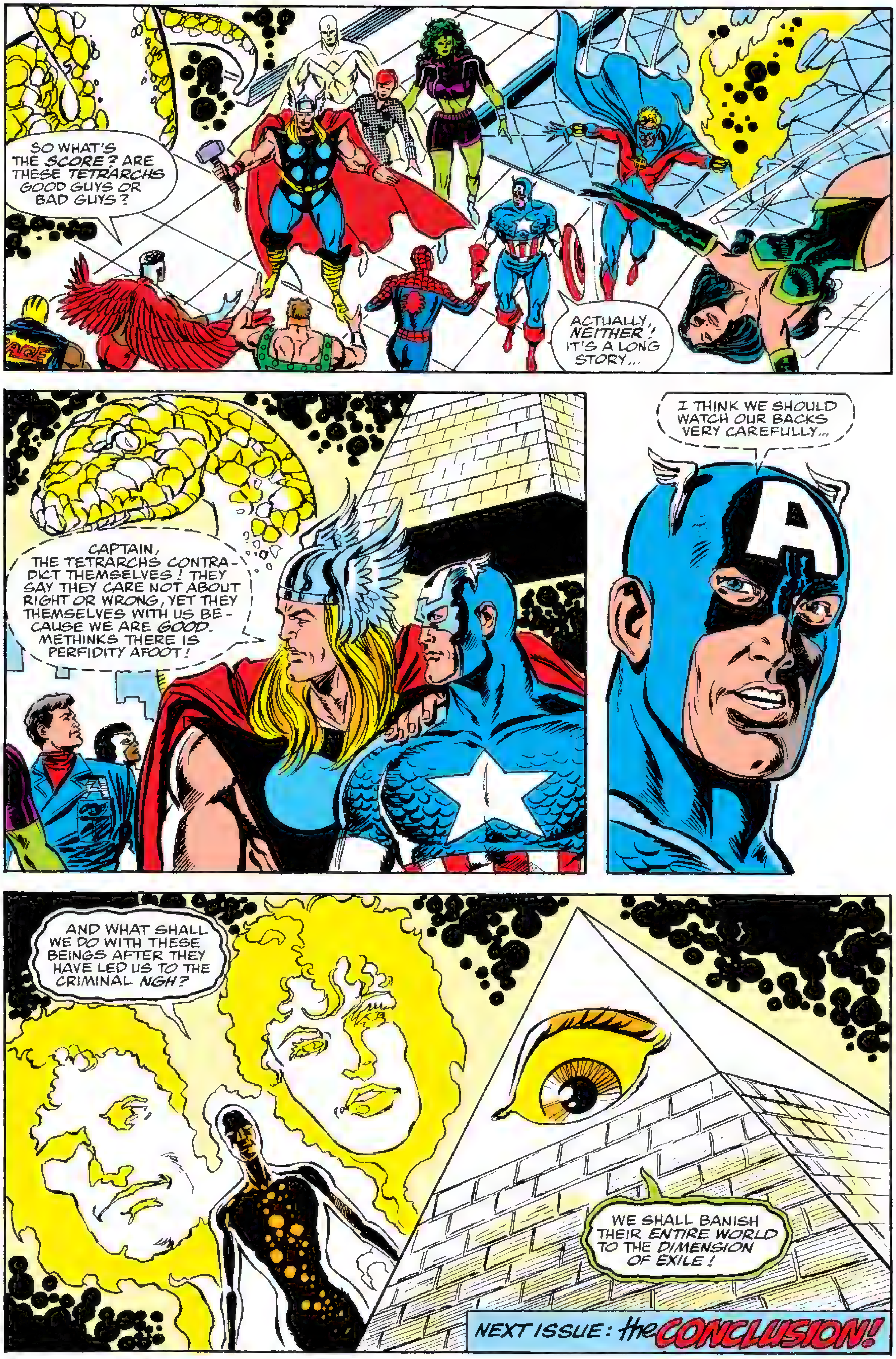
CONGRATULATIONS, AVENGER!
THAT WAS FAST! NOT MUCH OF A PAST, HUH?


IT'S *TRUE?* EVERYTHING THAT WENT UP ON THE SCREEN IN THERE GOT *ERASED?*
ABSOLUTELY! IF *TONY STARK* DESIGNED IT, THERE'S NO GETTING AROUND IT!
ALL WE GET OUT HERE IS THE *GREEN LIGHT* THAT MEANS YOU PASSED WITH *FLYING COLORS!*
THESE ARE YOUR PERSONAL *MEMBERSHIP CARD/COMMO UNITS.* THIS WILL MAGNETICALLY OPEN ALL DOORS IN *AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS* AND ALLOWS YOU TO COMMUNICATE WITH HEADQUARTERS OR WITH OTHER *AVENGERS* THROUGH A BOUNCE-PATCH.
IT ALSO FUNCTIONS AS A *BANK CARD* TO ACCESS A SPECIAL *AVENGERS* FIELD-CONTINGENCY ACCOUNT AND IS ACTUALLY A MINIATURE COMPUTER TERMINAL. IT IS SOLAR-POWERED, WATERPROOF, SHOCKPROOF AND WILL STOP A .357 MAGNUM BULLET AT CLOSE RANGE.
AVENGER
PRIORITY IDENTIF
UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL
A PERSONAL PHONE NUMBER, KNOWN ONLY TO YOU CAN BE PROGRAMMED INTO IT TO ALLOW MEMBERS OF YOUR FAMILY OR ANY LOVED ONE TO CONTACT YOU IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY.
I THINK I'LL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF *THAT* PARTICULAR LITTLE SERVICE RIGHT AWAY!


IN BROOKLYN, AT 535-19 DUBOIS STREET...
BRRNG!
THAT'S GOT TO BE ELVIN!
BRRNG!
NOT SO FAST, GRANNY!
YOU WILL NOT EXCLAIM OR ALTER THE EXPRESSION ON YOUR FACE...
...WE HAVE YOUR GRANDMOTHER AND WE ARE PERFECTLY CAPABLE OF ARRANGING AN EXCRUTIATING AND PROLONGED DEMISE FOR HER SHOULD YOU FAIL TO COOPERATE IN EVERY WAY!
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
COME HOME, ELVIN! YOUR GRANNY MISSES YOU!
ANYTHING WRONG? YOU LOOK LIKE SOMEBODY JUST RAN OVER YOUR DOG!


NO... NOTHING'S THE MATTER...
EVERYTHING IS JUST FINE...
ELVIN'S A *GOOD BOY*, GRANNY STAPLES! HE'LL BE RIGHT HOME!
AND WHEN HE GETS HERE, HE'S GOING TO KICK YOU OUT OF MY KITCHEN, *SATAN!* YOU AND ALL YOUR *DEVILS!*
I KEEP TELLING YOU, GRANNY -- I'M NOT *SATAN*, I'M JUST PLAIN OL' *NGH THE UNSPEAKABLE* AND THESE ARE MY *HORDES* OF *INTER-DIMENSIONAL CRIMINALS!*
I'M NOT INTERESTED IN *SOULS*. I'M JUST INTO *EVIL* FOR ITS OWN SAKE!
SMARTFOOD
WHAT A *JOKE, NGH!* THE *TETRARCHS* HAVE BANISHED THE VERY HEROES WHO COULD HAVE *OPPOSED* US!
IT CRACKS ME UP, *XA!* AND AS SOON AS *ELVIN* GETS HERE, WE'LL HAVE ONE OF THE *AVENGER'S* REPLACEMENTS IN OUR POWER!


AT AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS...
AWWWOOOOGHA!
WHAT'S THAT?
SECURITY ALARM!
SOMETHING'S ON THE ROOF!
SOMETHING BIG!
SECURITY BREACH...!
...ALL RESERVE SUBSTITUTE AVENGERS AND SUPPORT CREW COVER THE ROOF!
IT'S CAP AND THE PRIMARY AVENGERS! THEY'RE BACK!


SO WHAT'S THE *SCORE?* ARE THESE *TETRARCHS* GOOD GUYS OR BAD GUYS?
ACTUALLY, *NEITHER*! IT'S A LONG STORY...
CAPTAIN, THE TETRARCHS CONTRADICT THEMSELVES! THEY SAY THEY CARE NOT ABOUT RIGHT OR WRONG, YET THEY THEMSELVES WITH US BECAUSE WE ARE *GOOD*. METHINKS THERE IS PERFIDITY AFOOT!
I THINK WE SHOULD WATCH OUR BACKS VERY CAREFULLY...
AND WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH THESE BEINGS AFTER THEY HAVE LED US TO THE CRIMINAL *NGH*?
WE SHALL BANISH THEIR *ENTIRE WORLD* TO THE *DIMENSION OF EXILE*!
NEXT ISSUE: the CONCLUSION!

MARVEL COMICS
AVENGERS
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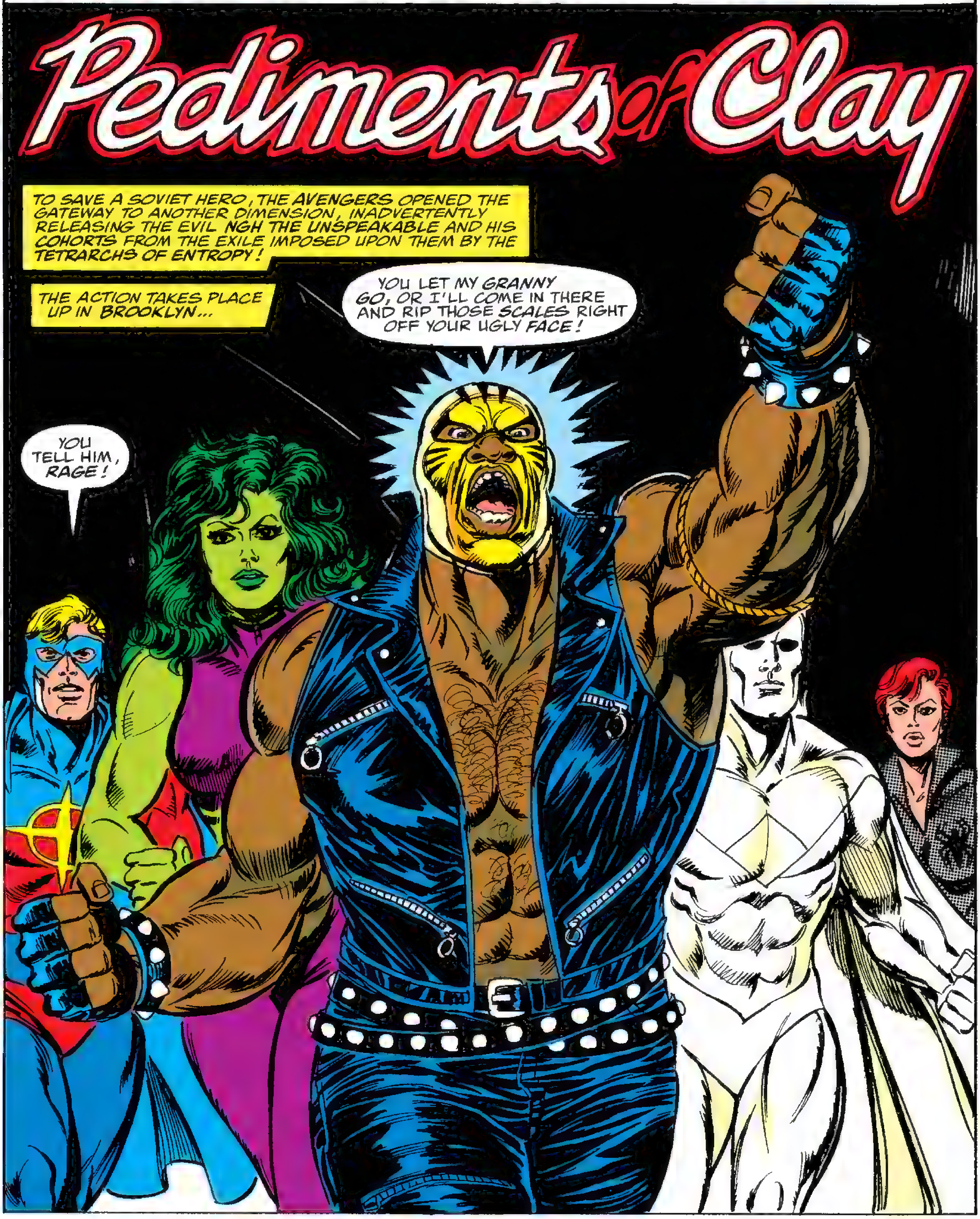
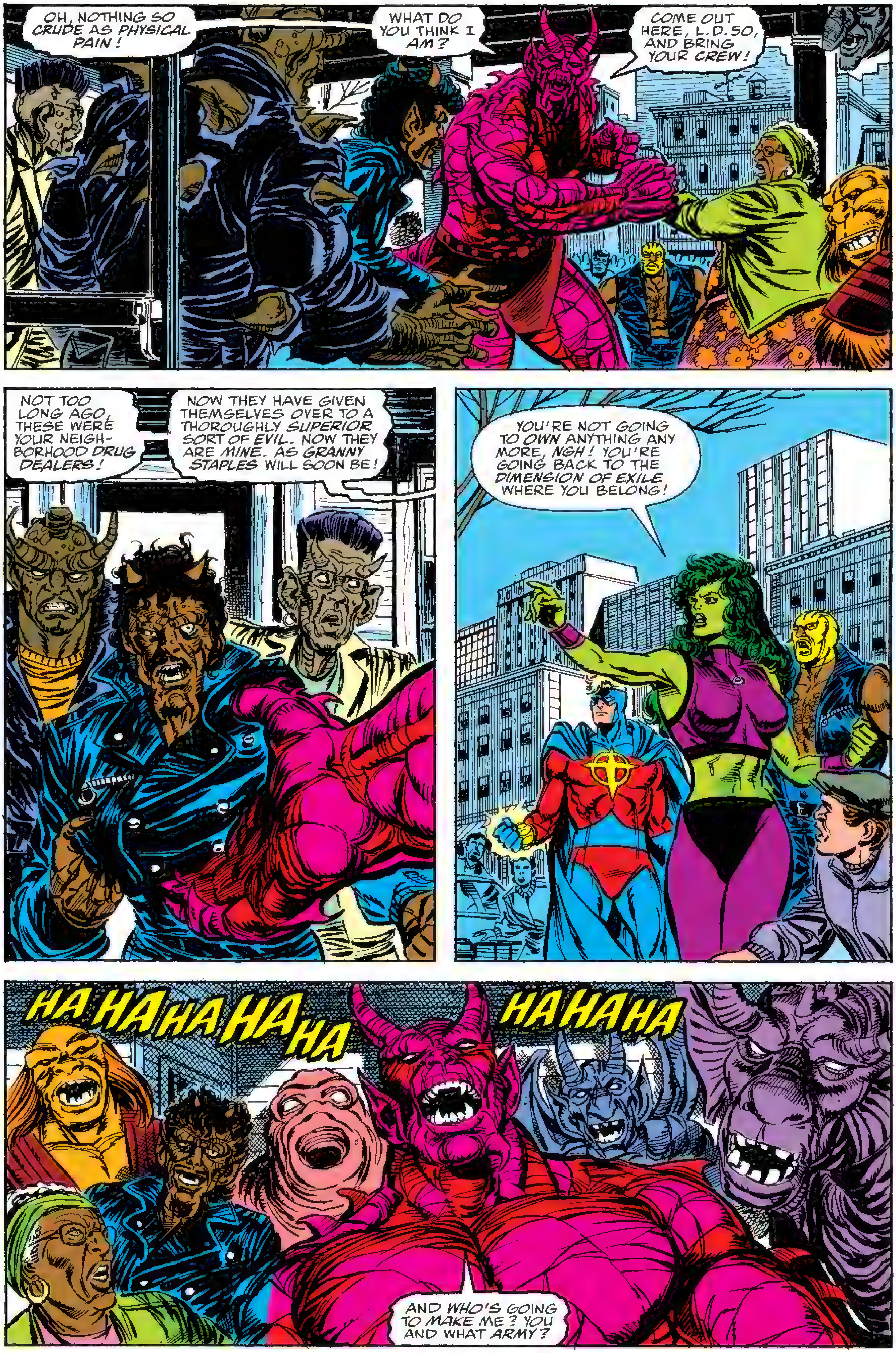
TM
$1.00 US
$1.25 CAN
331
APR
02458
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
IN FINAL BATTLE AGAINST THE TETRARCHS OF ENTROPY!

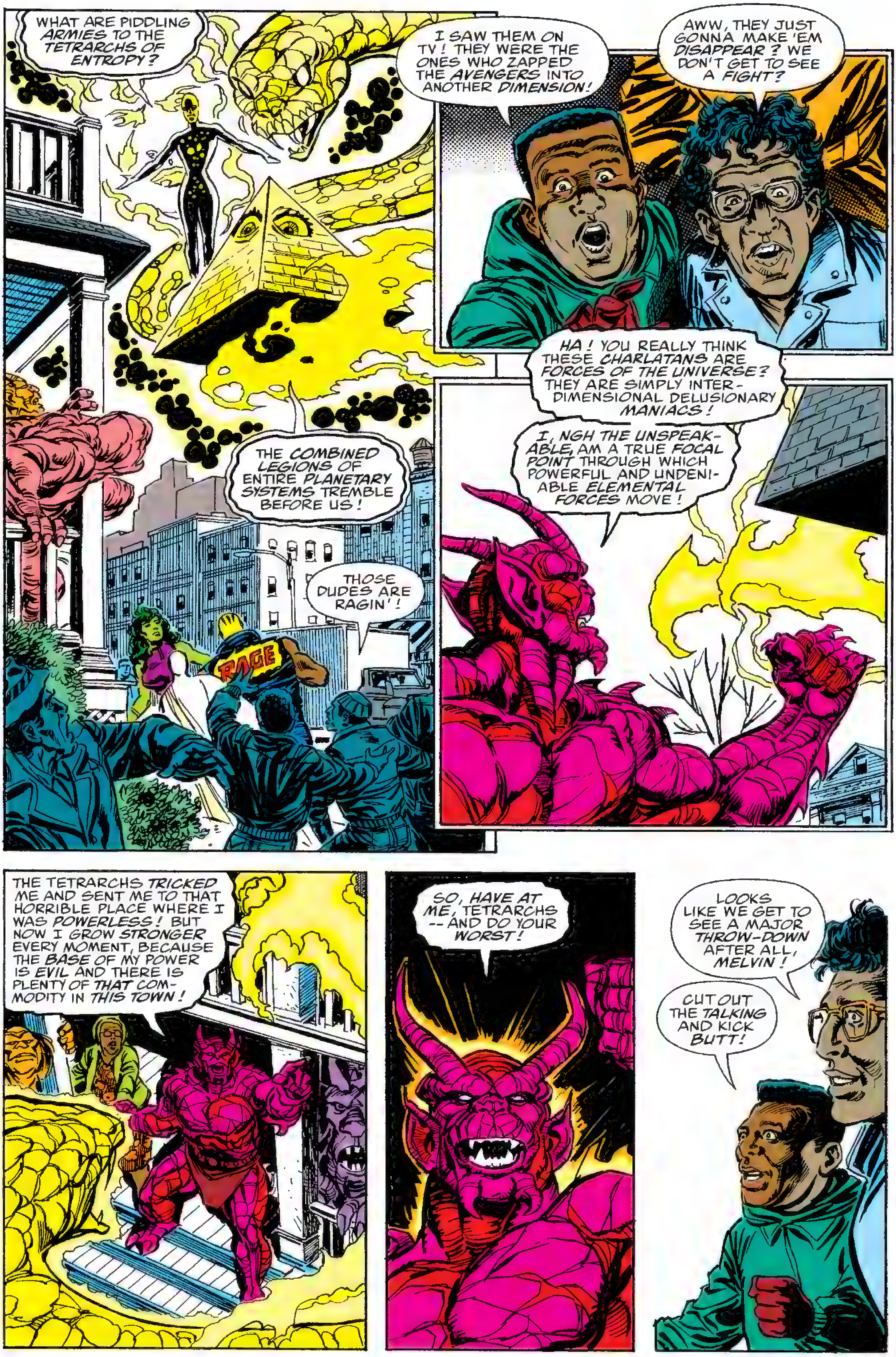
TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND!
STAN LEE PRESENTS . . . THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

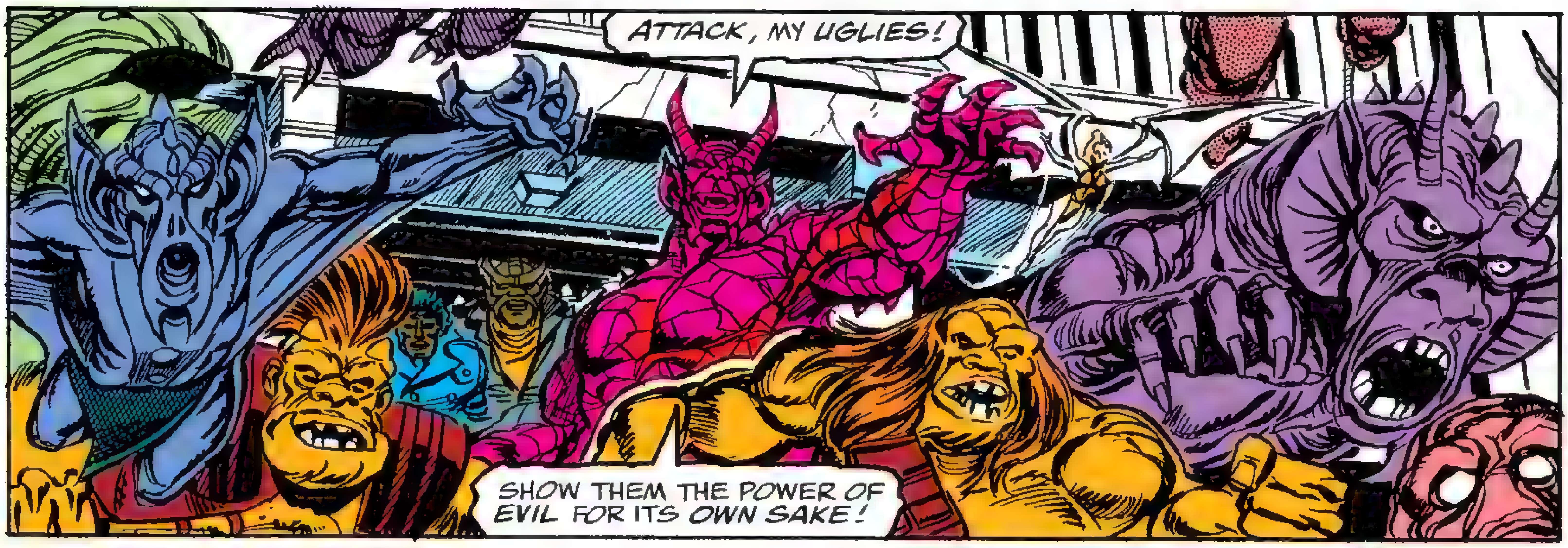

Pediments of Clay
TO SAVE A SOVIET HERO, THE AVENGERS OPENED THE GATEWAY TO ANOTHER DIMENSION, INADVERTENTLY RELEASING THE EVIL NGH THE UNSPEAKABLE AND HIS COHORTS FROM THE EXILE IMPOSED UPON THEM BY THE TETRARCHS OF ENTROPY!
THE ACTION TAKES PLACE UP IN BROOKLYN...
YOU LET MY GRANNY GO, OR I'LL COME IN THERE AND RIP THOSE SCALES RIGHT OFF YOUR UGLY FACE!
YOU TELL HIM, RAGE!

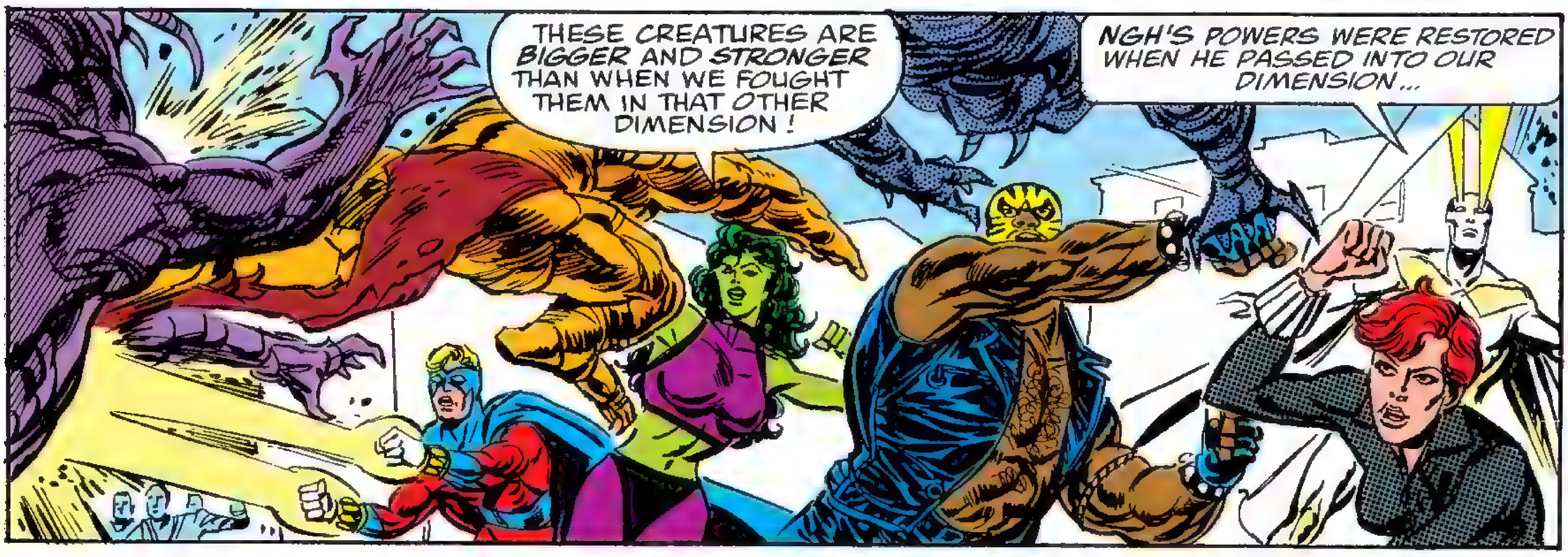
SCRIPT: LARRY HAMA | BREAKDOWNS: PAUL RYAN | FINISHES: TOM PALMER | COLORING: CHRISTIE SCHEELE | LETTERING: BILL OAKLEY | EDITOR: HOWARD MACKIE | EDITOR IN CHIEF: TOM DeFALCO

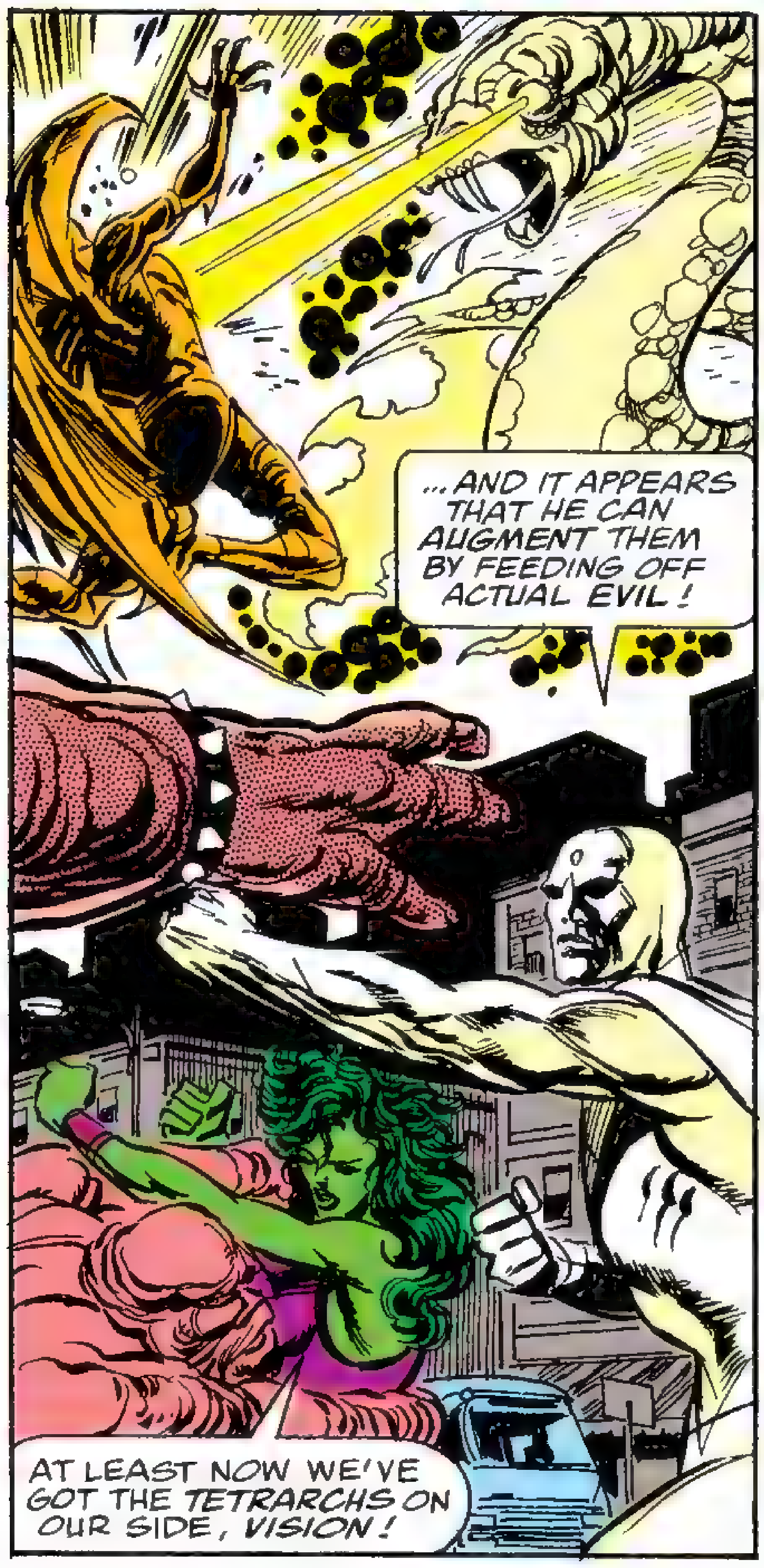
YOU IGNORANT FOOL! THE WHOLE POINT OF MY TAKING YOUR PRECIOUS GRANNY HOSTAGE, WAS TO TURN YOU INTO MY AGENT INSIDE THE AVENGERS!
I FIGURED AS MUCH! BUT MY GRANNY TAUGHT ME NEVER TO MAKE ANY SORT OF DEAL WITH YOUR KIND!
RAGE
WOW! BLACK WIDOW, VISION, QUASAR AND SHE-HULK RIGHT ON OUR BLOCK!
I BROUGHT THAT BOY UP GOOD!
AND CHECK OUT WHAT'S COMING OUT OF OL' NERDY ELVIN'S HOUSE!
I ALSO WARNED YOU ABOUT TELLING YOUR FELLOW AVENGERS ANYTHING ABOUT THIS!
DON'T YOU PAY THIS ONE NO MIND! HE'S THE PRINCE OF LIARS!
NOW, YOUR GRANNY IS GOING TO SUFFER FOR YOUR DISOBEDIENCE!
YOU LAY ONE CLAW ON HER AND--

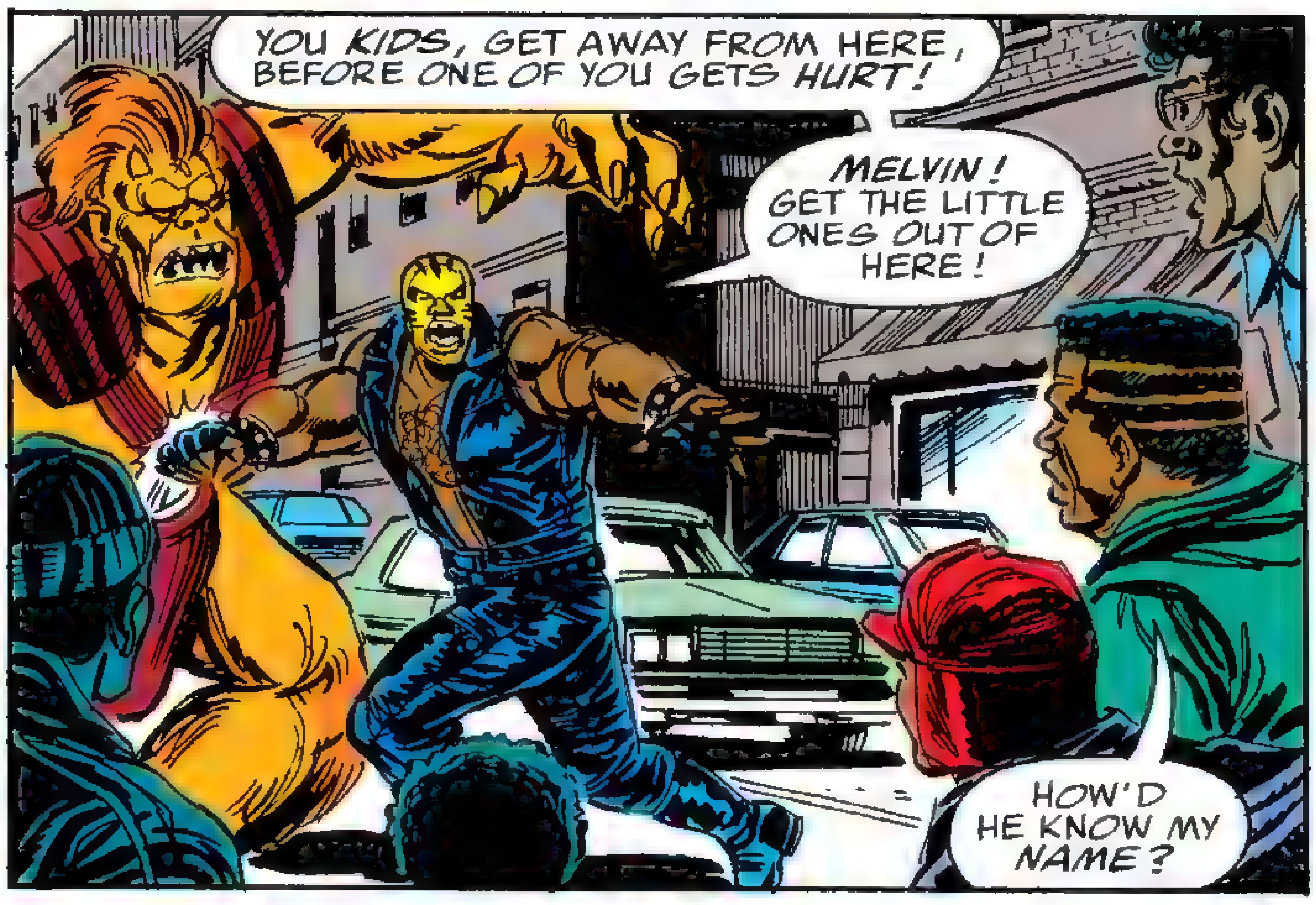

OH, NOTHING SO CRUDE AS PHYSICAL PAIN!
WHAT DO YOU THINK I AM?
COME OUT HERE, L.D. 50, AND BRING YOUR CREW!
NOT TOO LONG AGO, THESE WERE YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD DRUG DEALERS!
NOW THEY HAVE GIVEN THEMSELVES OVER TO A THOROUGHLY SUPERIOR SORT OF EVIL. NOW THEY ARE MINE. AS GRANNY STAPLES WILL SOON BE!
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO OWN ANYTHING ANY MORE, NGH! YOU'RE GOING BACK TO THE DIMENSION OF EXILE WHERE YOU BELONG!
HA HA HA HA HA
HA HA HA HA
AND WHO'S GOING TO MAKE ME? YOU AND WHAT ARMY?

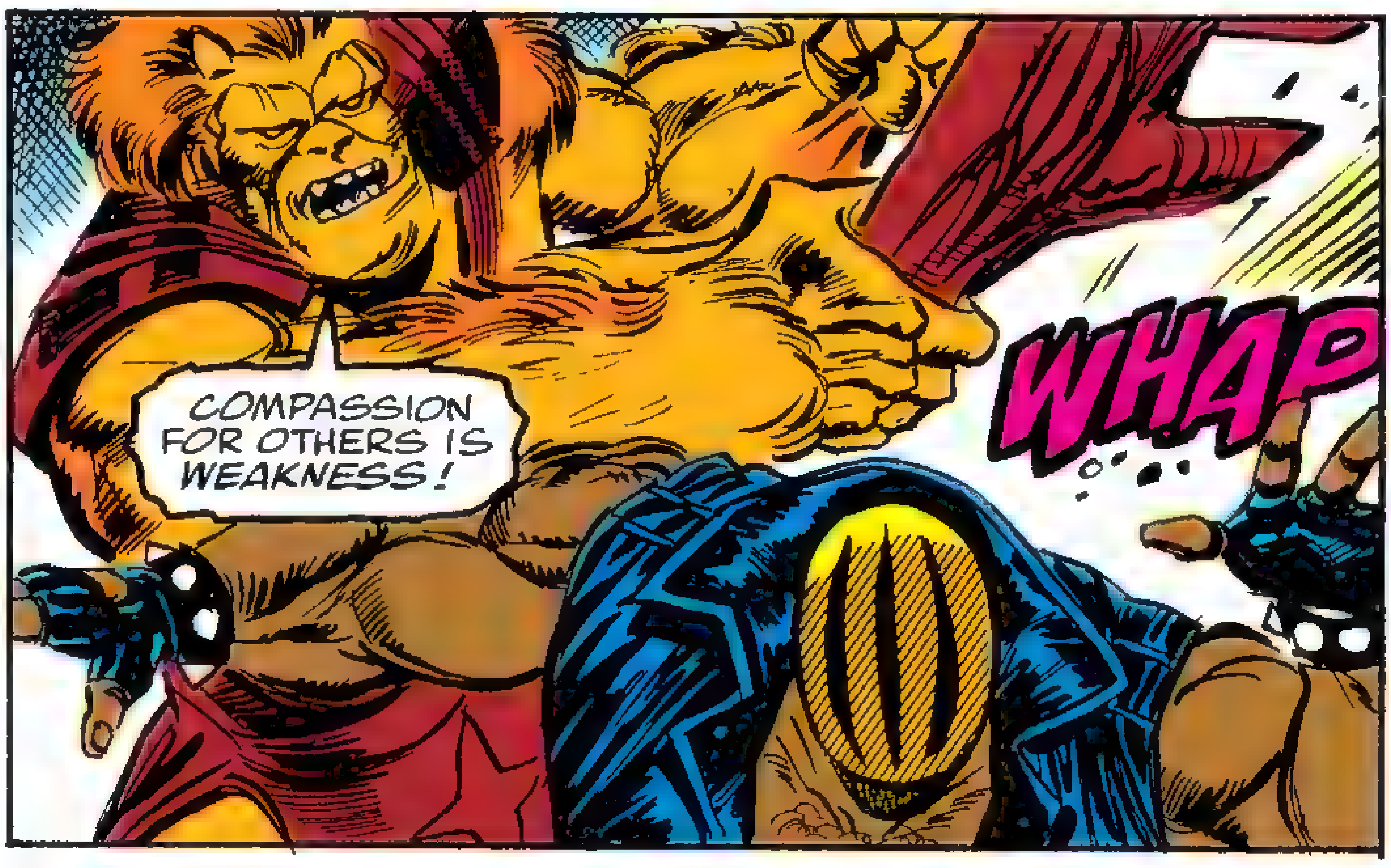

WHAT ARE PIDDLING *ARMIES* TO THE *TETRARCHS OF ENTROPY*?
THE *COMBINED LEGIONS* OF ENTIRE *PLANETARY SYSTEMS* TREMBLE BEFORE US!
RAGE
THOSE DUDES ARE RAGIN'!
I SAW THEM ON TV! THEY WERE THE ONES WHO ZAPPED THE *AVENGERS* INTO ANOTHER *DIMENSION*!
AWW, THEY JUST GONNA MAKE 'EM *DISAPPEAR*? WE DON'T GET TO SEE A *FIGHT*?
HA! YOU REALLY THINK THESE *CHARLATANS* ARE *FORCES OF THE UNIVERSE*? THEY ARE SIMPLY INTERDIMENSIONAL DELUSIONARY *MANIACS*!
I, NGH THE UNSPEAKABLE, AM A TRUE *FOCAL POINT* THROUGH WHICH POWERFUL AND UNDENIABLE *ELEMENTAL FORCES* MOVE!
THE TETRARCHS *TRICKED* ME AND SENT ME TO THAT HORRIBLE PLACE WHERE I WAS *POWERLESS*! BUT NOW I *GROW STRONGER* EVERY MOMENT, BECAUSE THE *BASE OF MY POWER* IS *EVIL* AND THERE IS PLENTY OF *THAT* COMMODITY IN *THIS TOWN*!
SO, HAVE AT ME, TETRARCHS -- AND DO YOUR *WORST!*
LOOKS LIKE WE GET TO SEE A MAJOR *THROW-DOWN* AFTER ALL, *MELVIN*!
CUT OUT THE *TALKING* AND KICK *BUTT*!

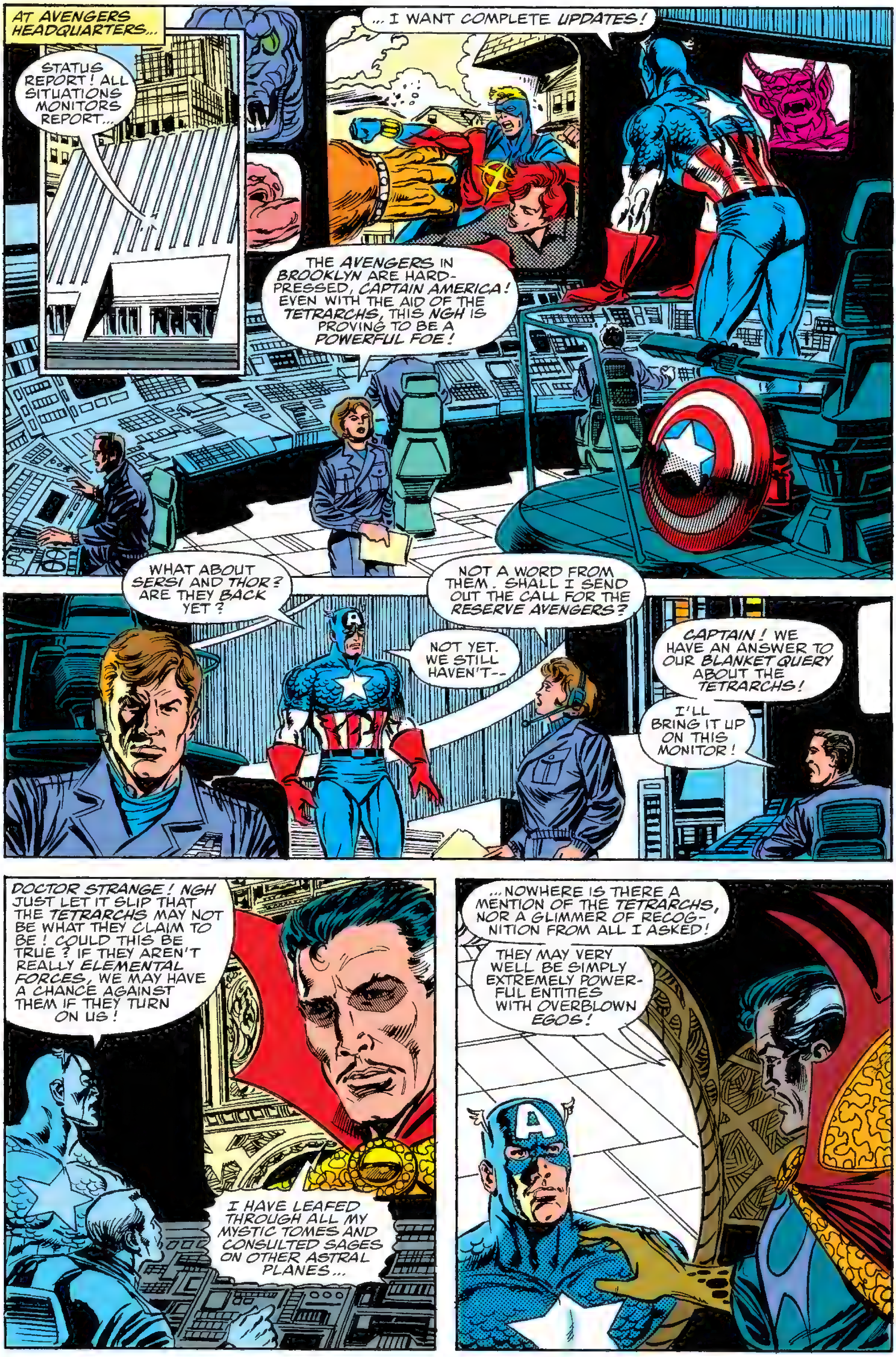

ATTACK, MY UGLIES!
SHOW THEM THE POWER OF EVIL FOR ITS OWN SAKE!

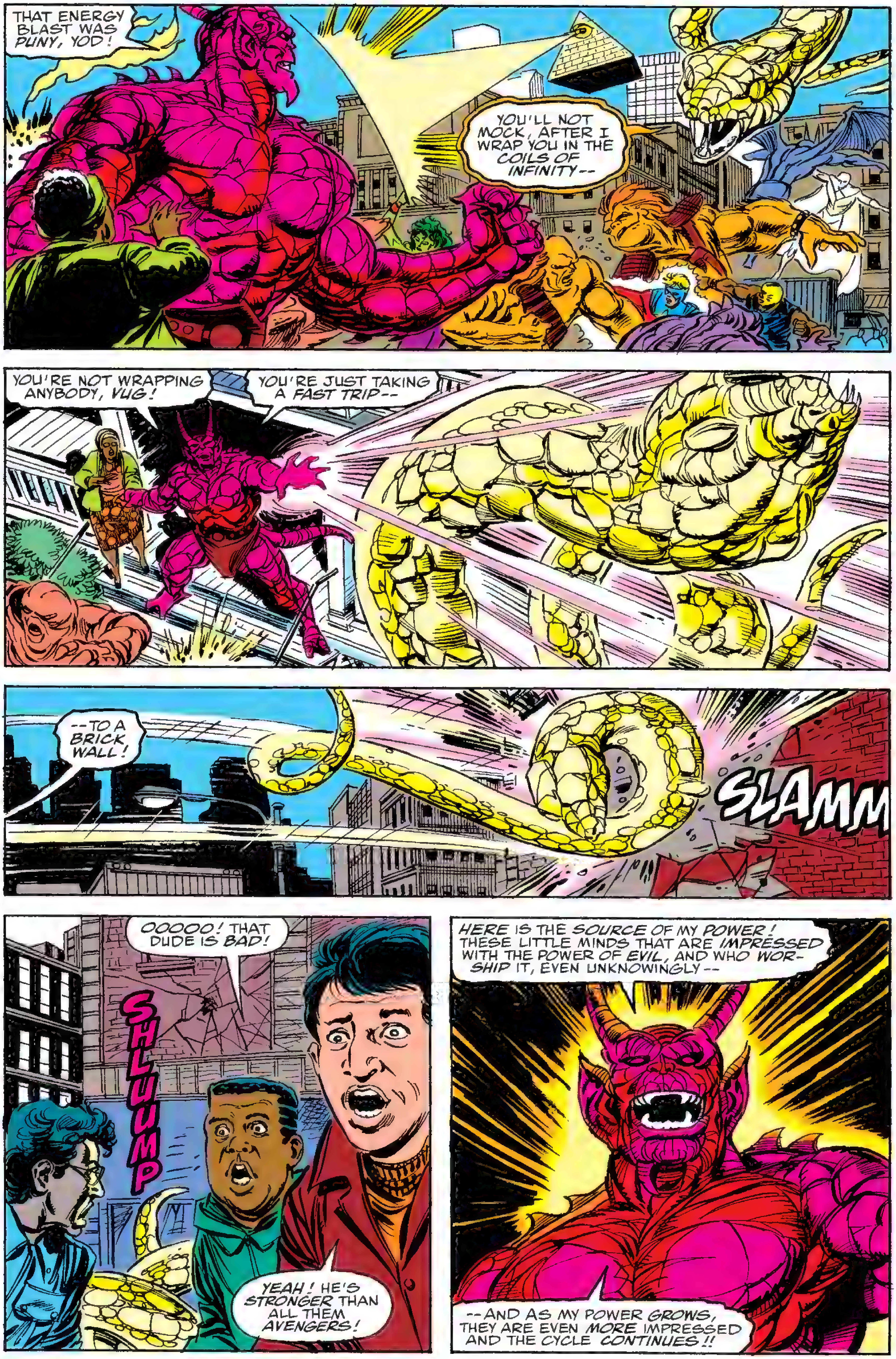

THESE CREATURES ARE BIGGER AND STRONGER THAN WHEN WE FOUGHT THEM IN THAT OTHER DIMENSION!
NGH'S POWERS WERE RESTORED WHEN HE PASSED INTO OUR DIMENSION...

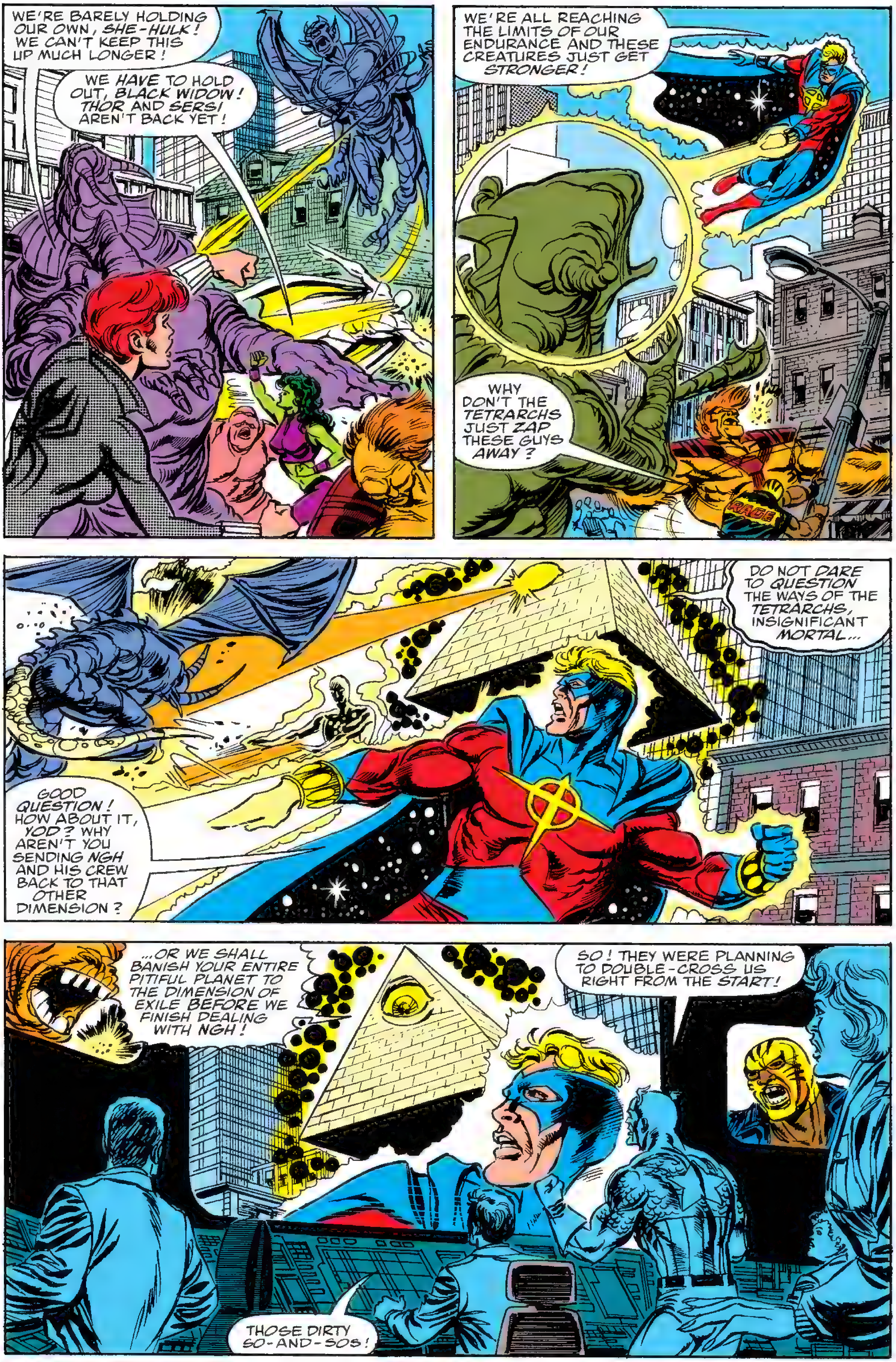

...AND IT APPEARS THAT HE CAN AUGMENT THEM BY FEEDING OFF ACTUAL EVIL!
AT LEAST NOW WE'VE GOT THE TETRARCHS ON OUR SIDE, VISION!

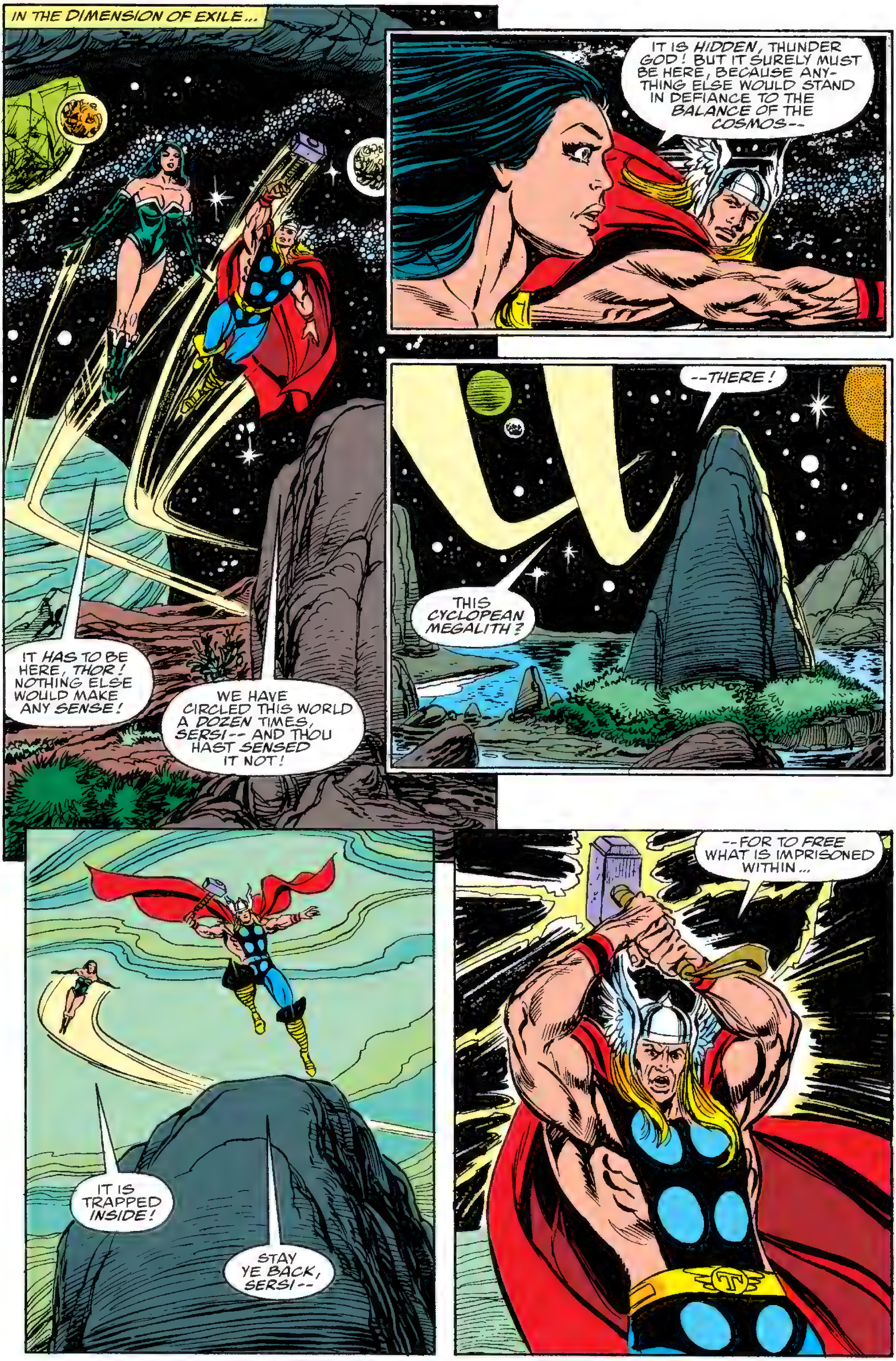

YOU KIDS, GET AWAY FROM HERE, BEFORE ONE OF YOU GETS HURT!
MELVIN! GET THE LITTLE ONES OUT OF HERE!
HOW'D HE KNOW MY NAME?

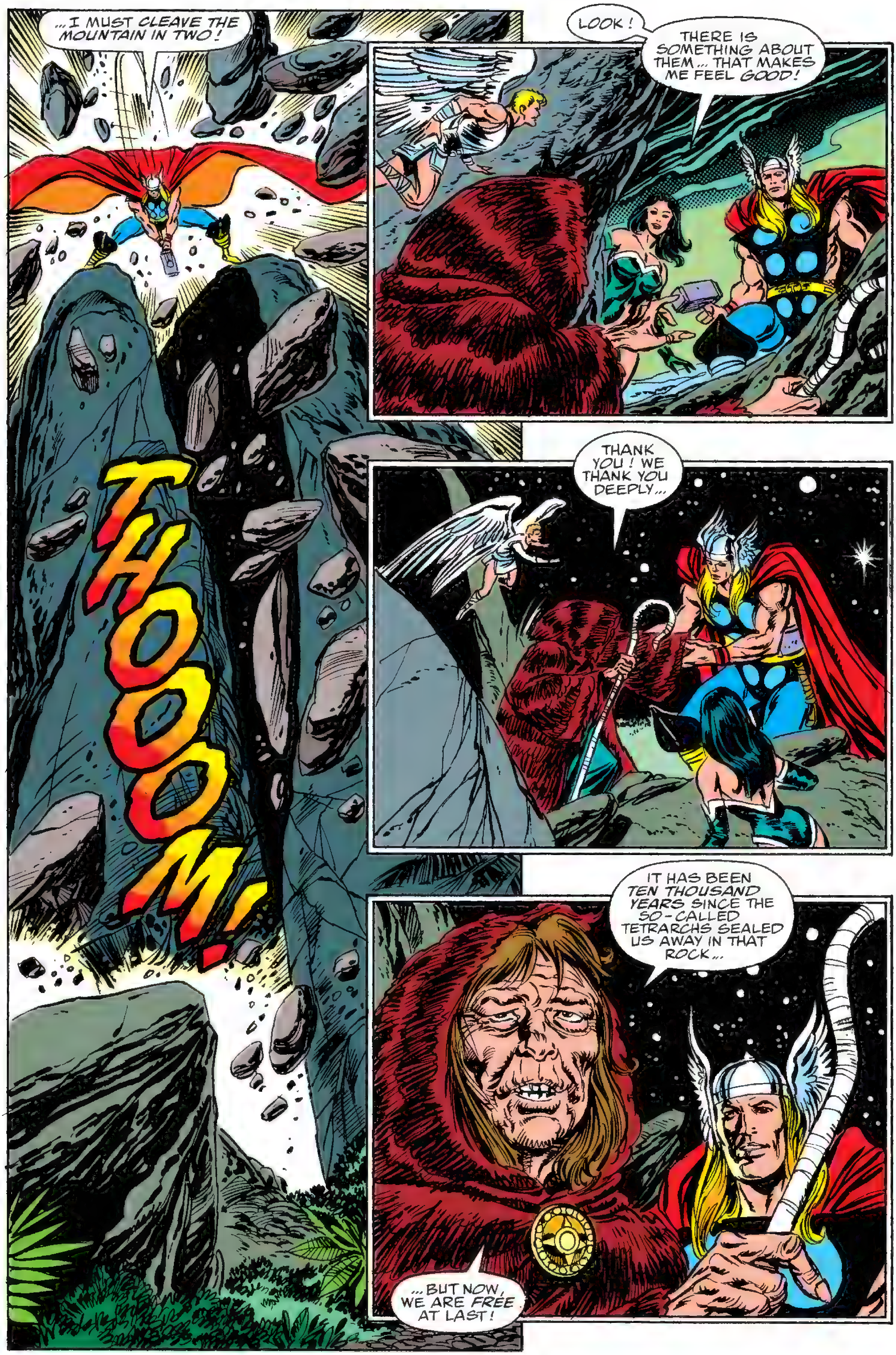

COMPASSION FOR OTHERS IS WEAKNESS!
WHAP

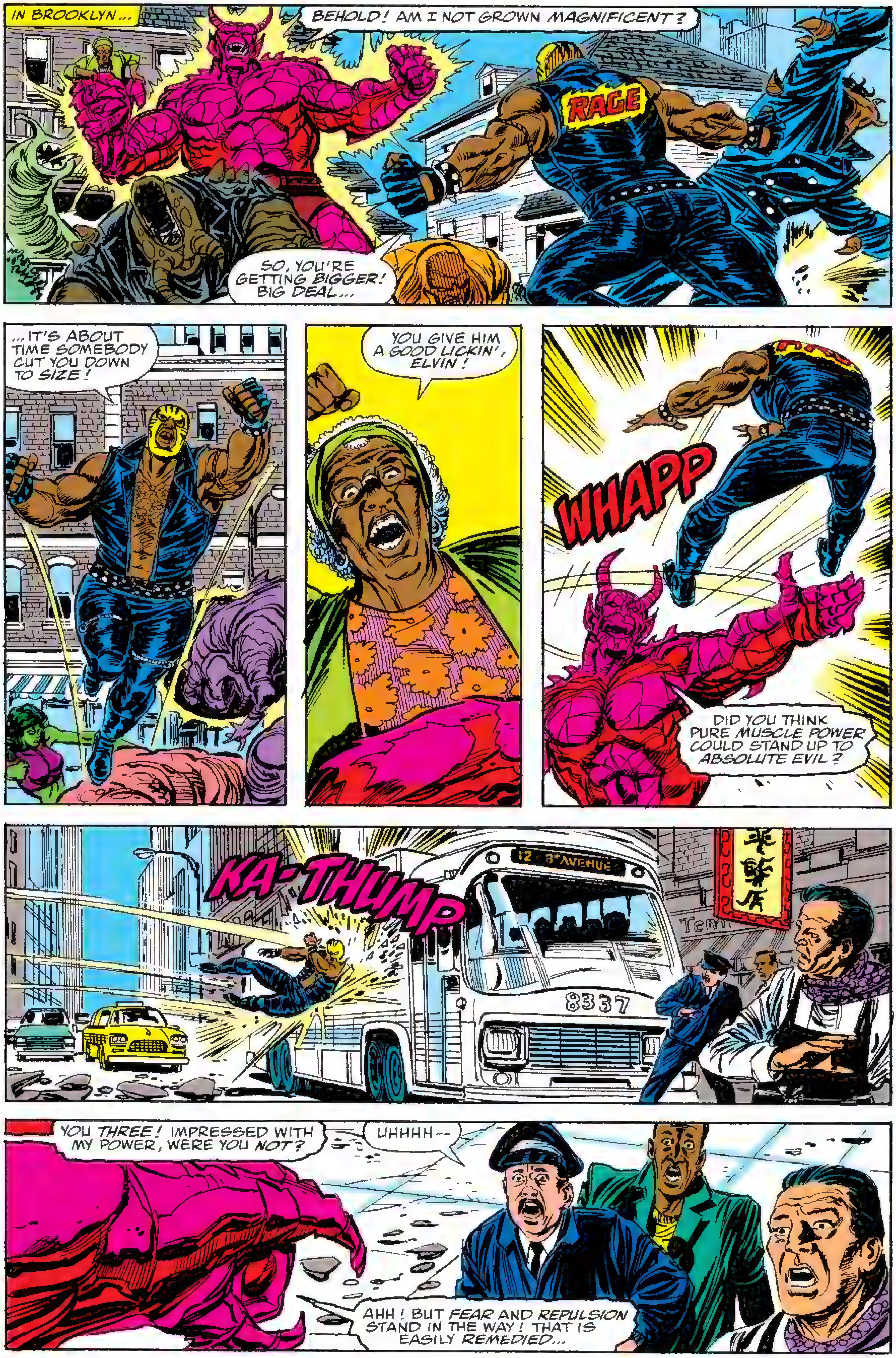

AT AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS...
STATUS REPORT! ALL SITUATIONS MONITORS REPORT...
...I WANT COMPLETE UPDATES!
THE AVENGERS IN BROOKLYN ARE HARD-PRESSED, CAPTAIN AMERICA! EVEN WITH THE AID OF THE TETRARCHS, THIS NGH IS PROVING TO BE A POWERFUL FOE!
WHAT ABOUT SERSI AND THOR? ARE THEY BACK YET?
NOT YET. WE STILL HAVEN'T--
NOT A WORD FROM THEM. SHALL I SEND OUT THE CALL FOR THE RESERVE AVENGERS?
CAPTAIN! WE HAVE AN ANSWER TO OUR BLANKET QUERY ABOUT THE TETRARCHS!
I'LL BRING IT UP ON THIS MONITOR!
DOCTOR STRANGE! NGH JUST LET IT SLIP THAT THE TETRARCHS MAY NOT BE WHAT THEY CLAIM TO BE! COULD THIS BE TRUE? IF THEY AREN'T REALLY ELEMENTAL FORCES, WE MAY HAVE A CHANCE AGAINST THEM IF THEY TURN ON US!
I HAVE LEAFED THROUGH ALL MY MYSTIC TOMES AND CONSULTED SAGES ON OTHER ASTRAL PLANES...
...NOWHERE IS THERE A MENTION OF THE TETRARCHS, NOR A GLIMMER OF RECOGNITION FROM ALL I ASKED!
THEY MAY VERY WELL BE SIMPLY EXTREMELY POWERFUL ENTITIES WITH OVERBLOWN EGOS!

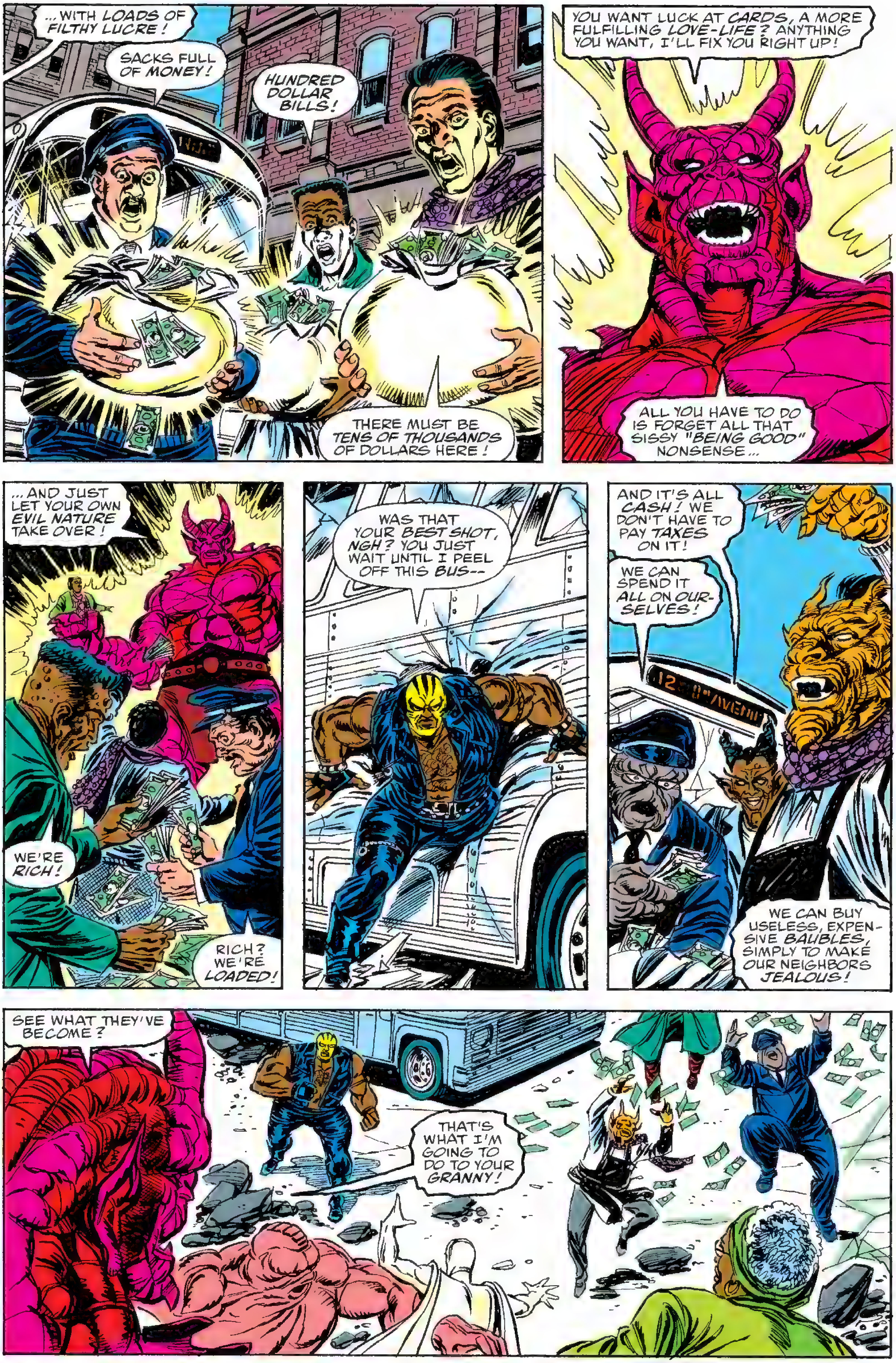

THAT ENERGY BLAST WAS *PUNY, YOD!*
YOU'LL NOT MOCK, AFTER I WRAP YOU IN THE *COILS OF INFINITY--*
YOU'RE NOT WRAPPING ANYBODY, *VUG!*
YOU'RE JUST TAKING A *FAST TRIP--*
--TO A *BRICK WALL!*
SLAMM
OOOOO! THAT DUDE IS *BAD!*
SHLUUMP
YEAH! HE'S *STRONGER* THAN ALL THEM *AVENGERS!*
HERE IS THE *SOURCE* OF MY *POWER!* THESE LITTLE MINDS THAT ARE *IMPRESSED* WITH THE POWER OF *EVIL*, AND WHO *WORSHIP* IT, EVEN UNKNOWINGLY--
--AND AS MY POWER *GROWS*, THEY ARE EVEN *MORE* IMPRESSED AND THE CYCLE *CONTINUES!!*

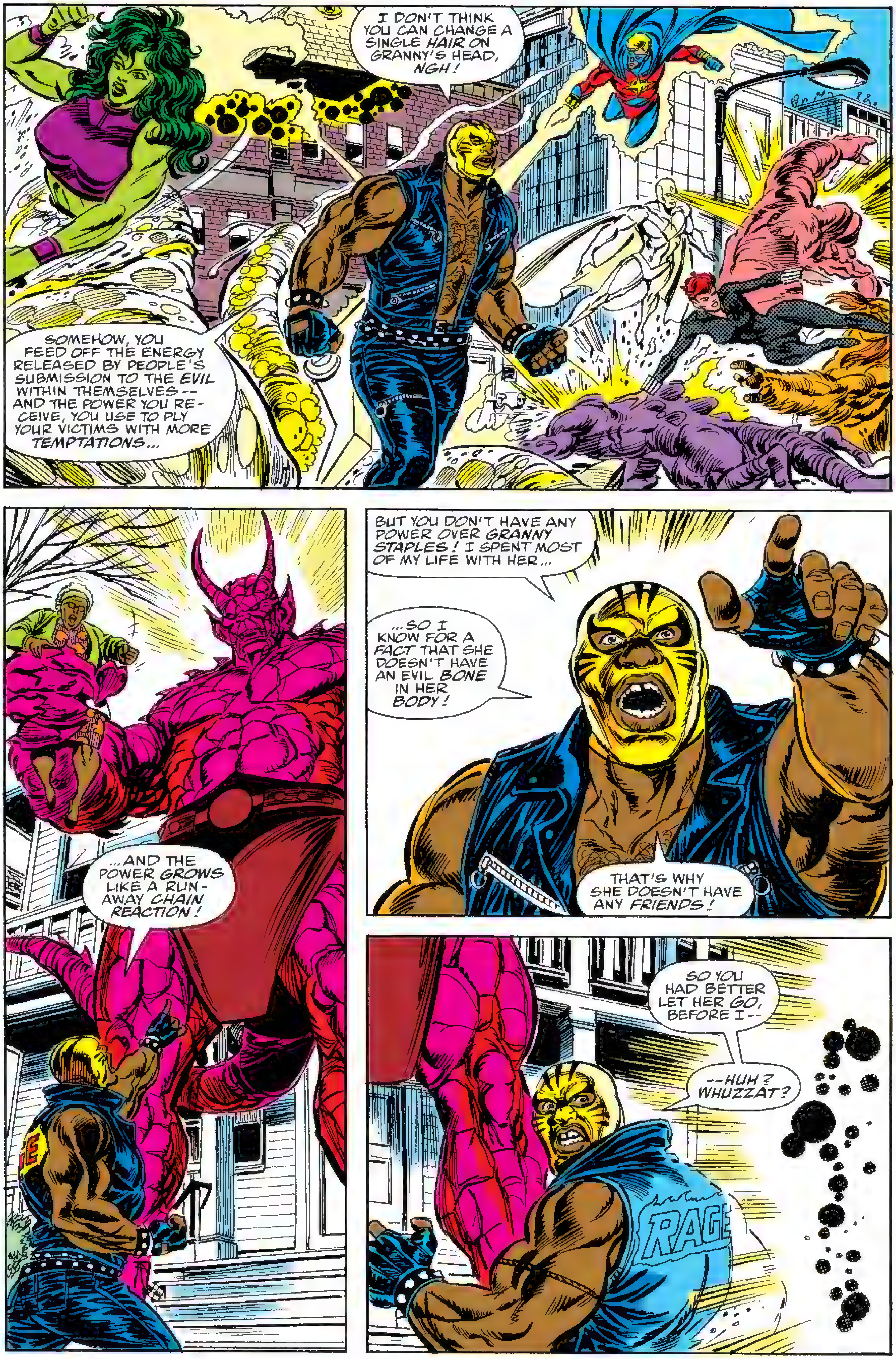

WE'RE BARELY HOLDING OUR OWN, *SHE-HULK*! WE CAN'T KEEP THIS UP MUCH LONGER!
WE *HAVE* TO HOLD OUT, *BLACK WIDOW*! *THOR* AND *SERSI* AREN'T BACK YET!
WE'RE ALL REACHING THE LIMITS OF OUR ENDURANCE AND THESE CREATURES JUST GET *STRONGER*!
WHY DON'T THE *TETRARCHS* JUST *ZAP* THESE GUYS *AWAY*?
RAGE
DO NOT *DARE* TO *QUESTION* THE WAYS OF THE *TETRARCHS*, INSIGNIFICANT *MORTAL*...
GOOD QUESTION! HOW ABOUT IT, *YOD*? WHY AREN'T YOU SENDING *NGH* AND HIS CREW BACK TO THAT *OTHER* DIMENSION?
...OR WE SHALL BANISH YOUR ENTIRE PITIFUL PLANET TO THE DIMENSION OF EXILE BEFORE WE FINISH DEALING WITH *NGH*!
SO! THEY WERE PLANNING TO DOUBLE-CROSS US RIGHT FROM THE *START*!
THOSE DIRTY SO-AND-SOS!

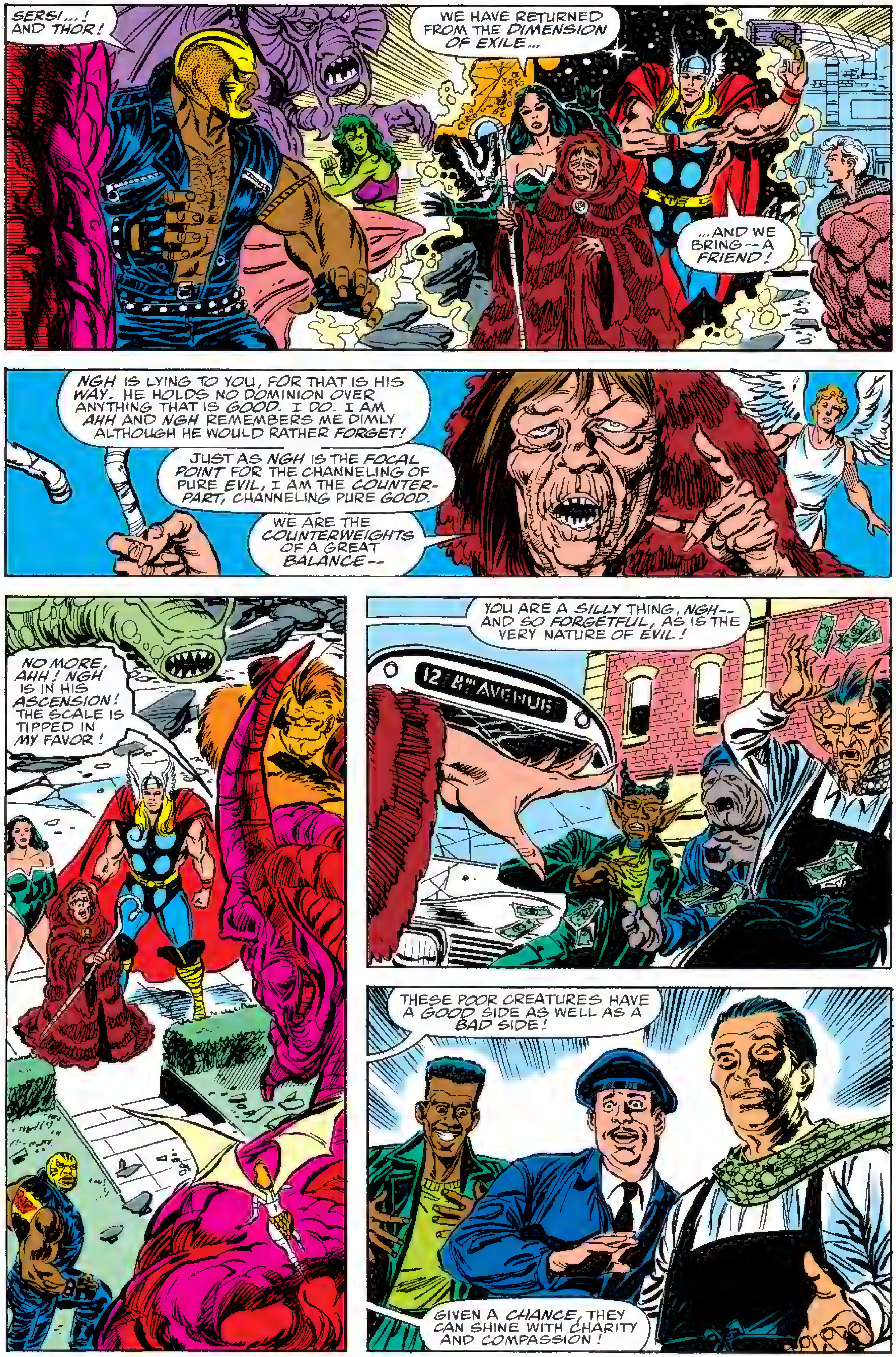

IN THE DIMENSION OF EXILE...
IT HAS TO BE HERE, THOR! NOTHING ELSE WOULD MAKE ANY SENSE!
WE HAVE CIRCLED THIS WORLD A DOZEN TIMES, SERSI-- AND THOU HAST SENSED IT NOT!
IT IS HIDDEN, THUNDER GOD! BUT IT SURELY MUST BE HERE, BECAUSE ANYTHING ELSE WOULD STAND IN DEFIANCE TO THE BALANCE OF THE COSMOS--
--THERE!
THIS CYCLOPEAN MEGALITH?
IT IS TRAPPED INSIDE!
STAY YE BACK, SERSI--
--FOR TO FREE WHAT IS IMPRISONED WITHIN...

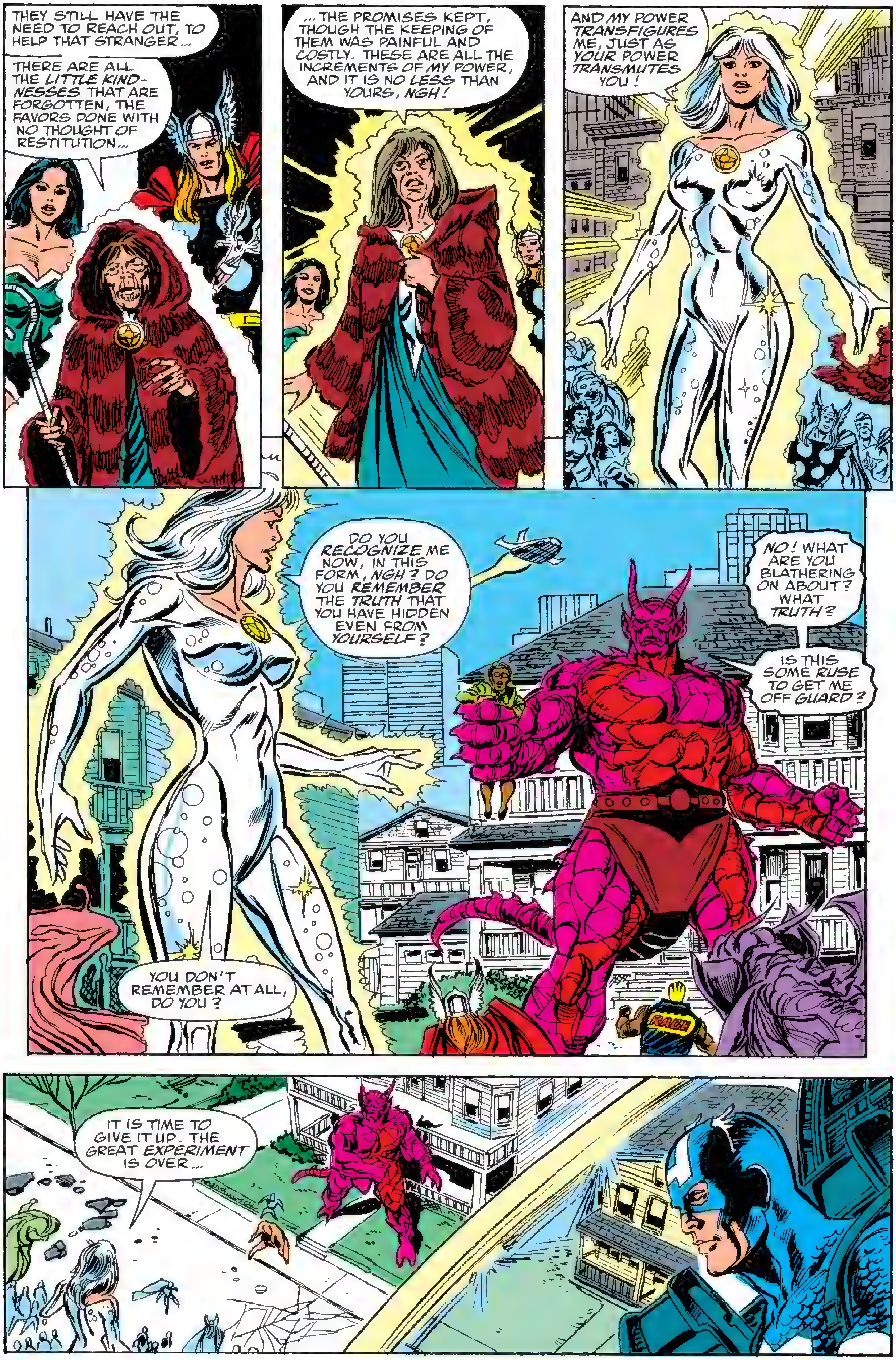

...I MUST CLEAVE THE MOUNTAIN IN TWO!
THOOOM!
LOOK!
THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT THEM... THAT MAKES ME FEEL GOOD!
THANK YOU! WE THANK YOU DEEPLY...
IT HAS BEEN TEN THOUSAND YEARS SINCE THE SO-CALLED TETRARCHS SEALED US AWAY IN THAT ROCK...
...BUT NOW, WE ARE FREE AT LAST!

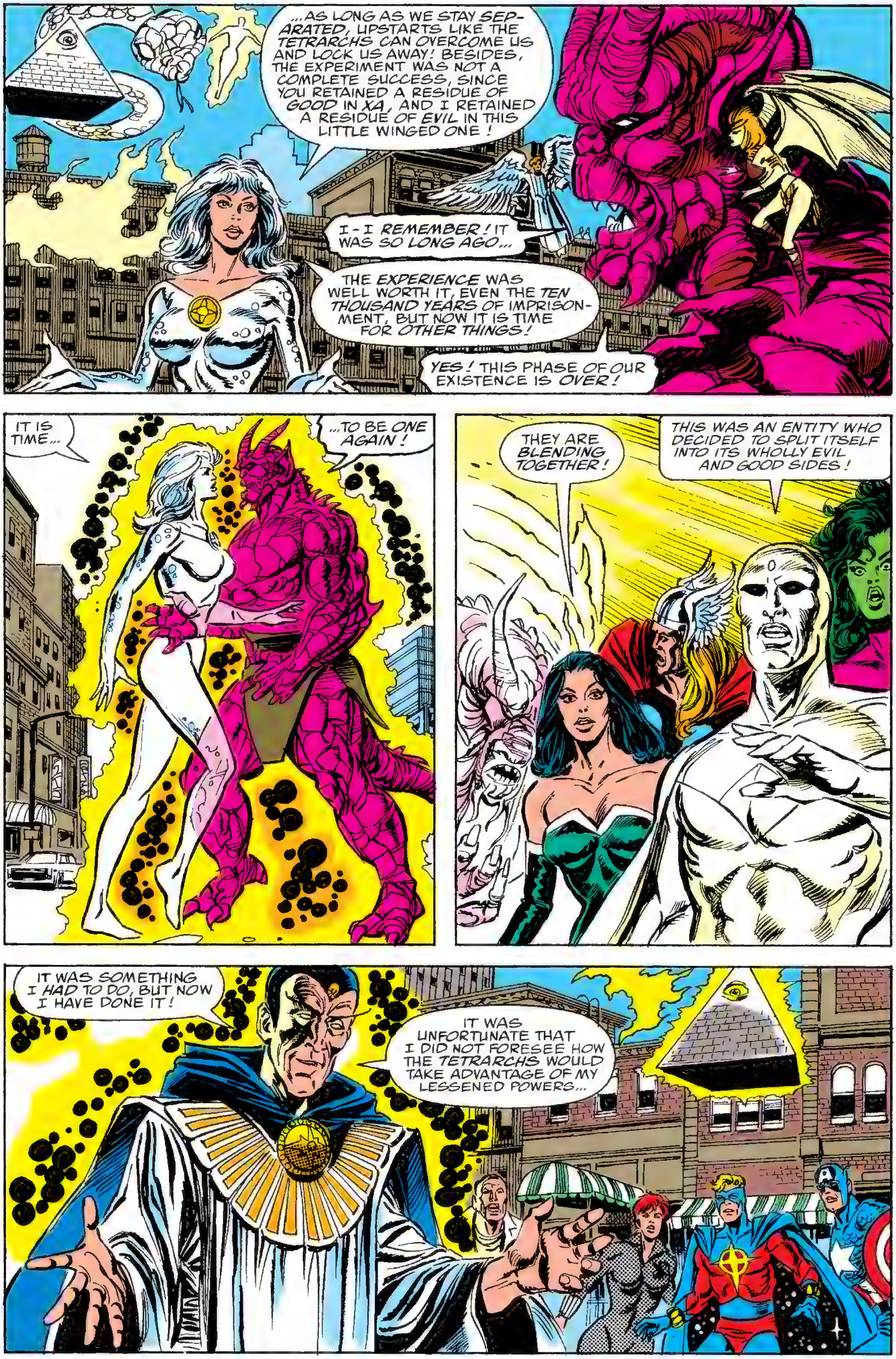

IN BROOKLYN...
BEHOLD! AM I NOT GROWN MAGNIFICENT?
RAGE
SO, YOU'RE GETTING BIGGER! BIG DEAL...
...IT'S ABOUT TIME SOMEBODY CUT YOU DOWN TO SIZE!
YOU GIVE HIM A GOOD LICKIN', ELVIN!
WHAPP
DID YOU THINK PURE MUSCLE POWER COULD STAND UP TO ABSOLUTE EVIL?
KA-THUMP
12 8th AVENUE
8337
Tem
YOU THREE! IMPRESSED WITH MY POWER, WERE YOU NOT?
UHHHH--
AHH! BUT FEAR AND REPULSION STAND IN THE WAY! THAT IS EASILY REMEDIED...

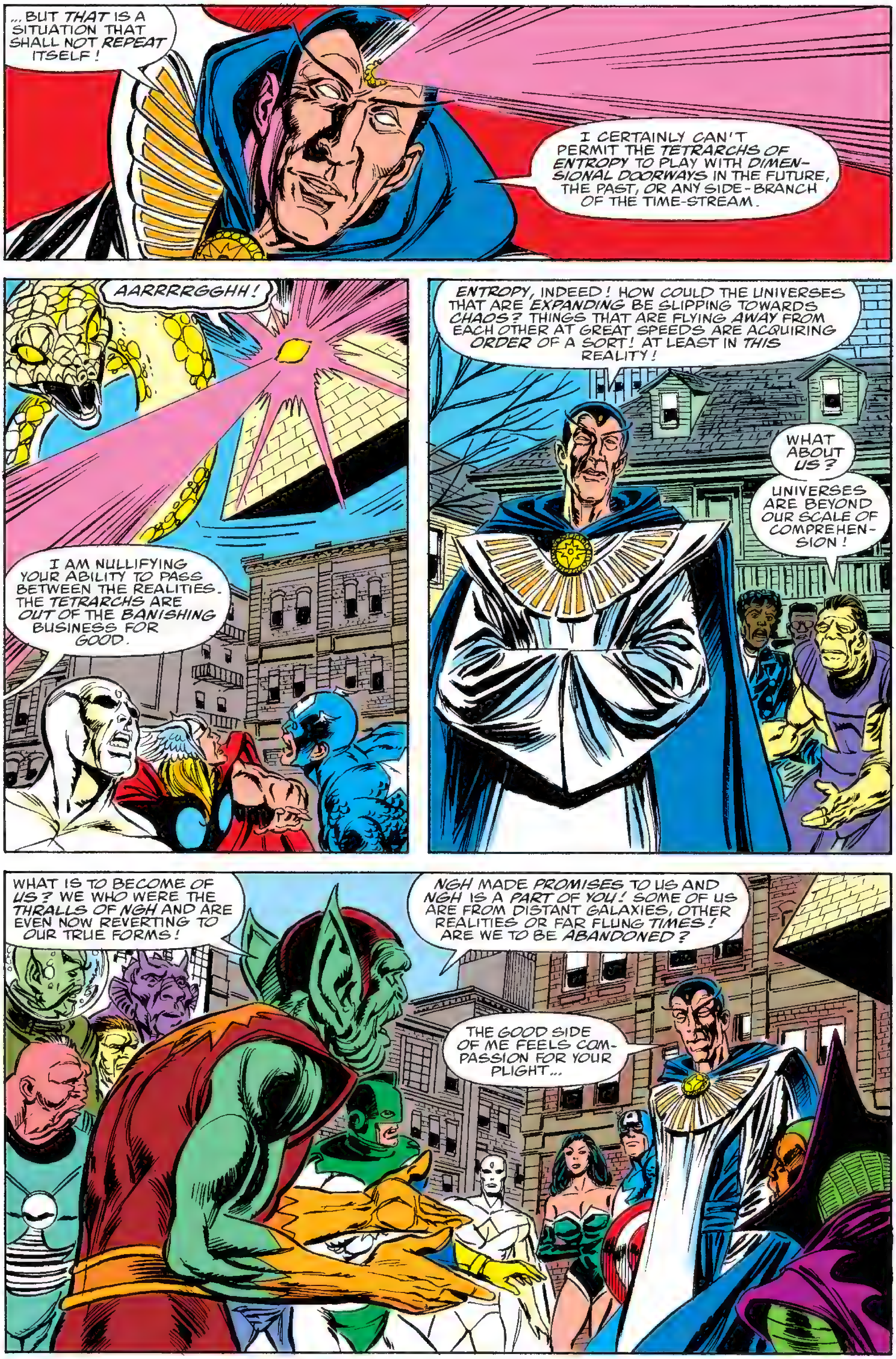

...WITH LOADS OF FILTHY LUCRE!
SACKS FULL OF MONEY!
HUNDRED DOLLAR BILLS!
THERE MUST BE TENS OF THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS HERE!
YOU WANT LUCK AT CARDS, A MORE FULFILLING LOVE-LIFE? ANYTHING YOU WANT, I'LL FIX YOU RIGHT UP!
ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS FORGET ALL THAT SISSY "BEING GOOD" NONSENSE...
...AND JUST LET YOUR OWN EVIL NATURE TAKE OVER!
WE'RE RICH!
RICH? WE'RE LOADED!
WAS THAT YOUR BEST SHOT, NGH? YOU JUST WAIT UNTIL I PEEL OFF THIS BUS--
AND IT'S ALL CASH! WE DON'T HAVE TO PAY TAXES ON IT!
WE CAN SPEND IT ALL ON OURSELVES!
12TH AVENUE
WE CAN BUY USELESS, EXPENSIVE BAUBLES, SIMPLY TO MAKE OUR NEIGHBORS JEALOUS!
SEE WHAT THEY'VE BECOME?
THAT'S WHAT I'M GOING TO DO TO YOUR GRANNY!

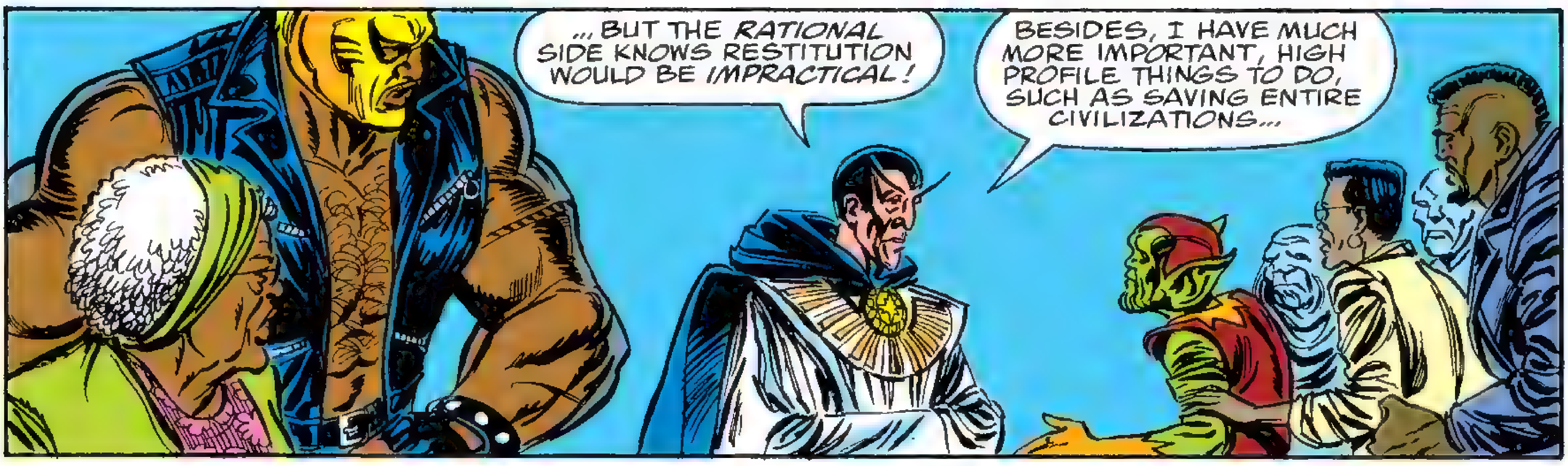

I DON'T THINK YOU CAN CHANGE A SINGLE *HAIR* ON GRANNY'S HEAD, *NGH!*
SOMEHOW, YOU FEED OFF THE ENERGY RELEASED BY PEOPLE'S SUBMISSION TO THE *EVIL* WITHIN THEMSELVES -- AND THE POWER YOU RECEIVE, YOU USE TO PLY YOUR VICTIMS WITH MORE *TEMPTATIONS...*
...AND THE POWER *GROWS* LIKE A RUN-AWAY *CHAIN REACTION!*
BUT YOU DON'T HAVE ANY POWER OVER *GRANNY STAPLES!* I SPENT MOST OF MY LIFE WITH HER...
...SO I KNOW FOR A *FACT* THAT SHE DOESN'T HAVE AN EVIL *BONE* IN HER *BODY!*
THAT'S WHY SHE DOESN'T HAVE ANY *FRIENDS!*
SO YOU HAD BETTER LET HER *GO,* BEFORE I --
--HUH? WHUZZAT?
RAGE

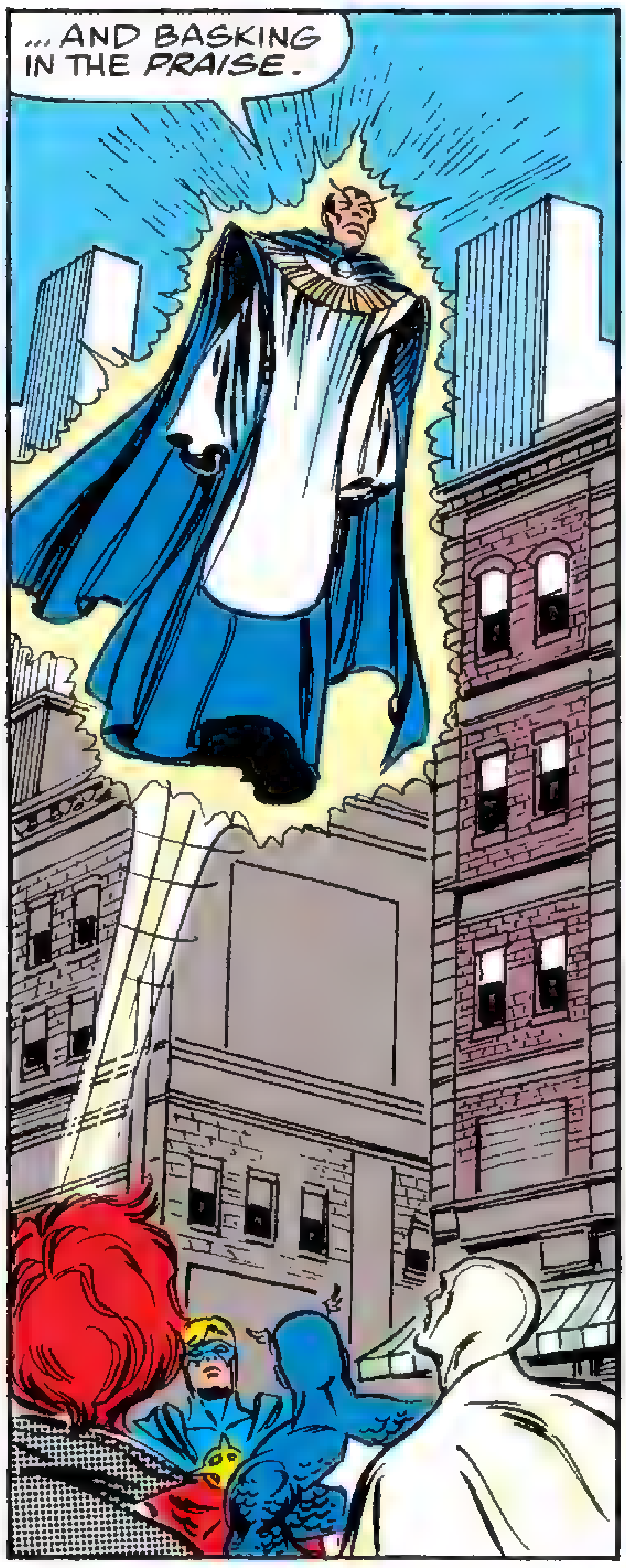

SERSI...! AND THOR!
WE HAVE RETURNED FROM THE DIMENSION OF EXILE...
...AND WE BRING--A FRIEND!
NGH IS LYING TO YOU, FOR THAT IS HIS WAY. HE HOLDS NO DOMINION OVER ANYTHING THAT IS GOOD. I DO. I AM AHH AND NGH REMEMBERS ME DIMLY ALTHOUGH HE WOULD RATHER FORGET!
JUST AS NGH IS THE FOCAL POINT FOR THE CHANNELING OF PURE EVIL, I AM THE COUNTERPART, CHANNELING PURE GOOD.
WE ARE THE COUNTERWEIGHTS OF A GREAT BALANCE--
NO MORE, AHH! NGH IS IN HIS ASCENSION! THE SCALE IS TIPPED IN MY FAVOR!
YOU ARE A SILLY THING, NGH--AND SO FORGETFUL, AS IS THE VERY NATURE OF EVIL!
12 8th AVENUE
THESE POOR CREATURES HAVE A GOOD SIDE AS WELL AS A BAD SIDE!
GIVEN A CHANCE, THEY CAN SHINE WITH CHARITY AND COMPASSION!

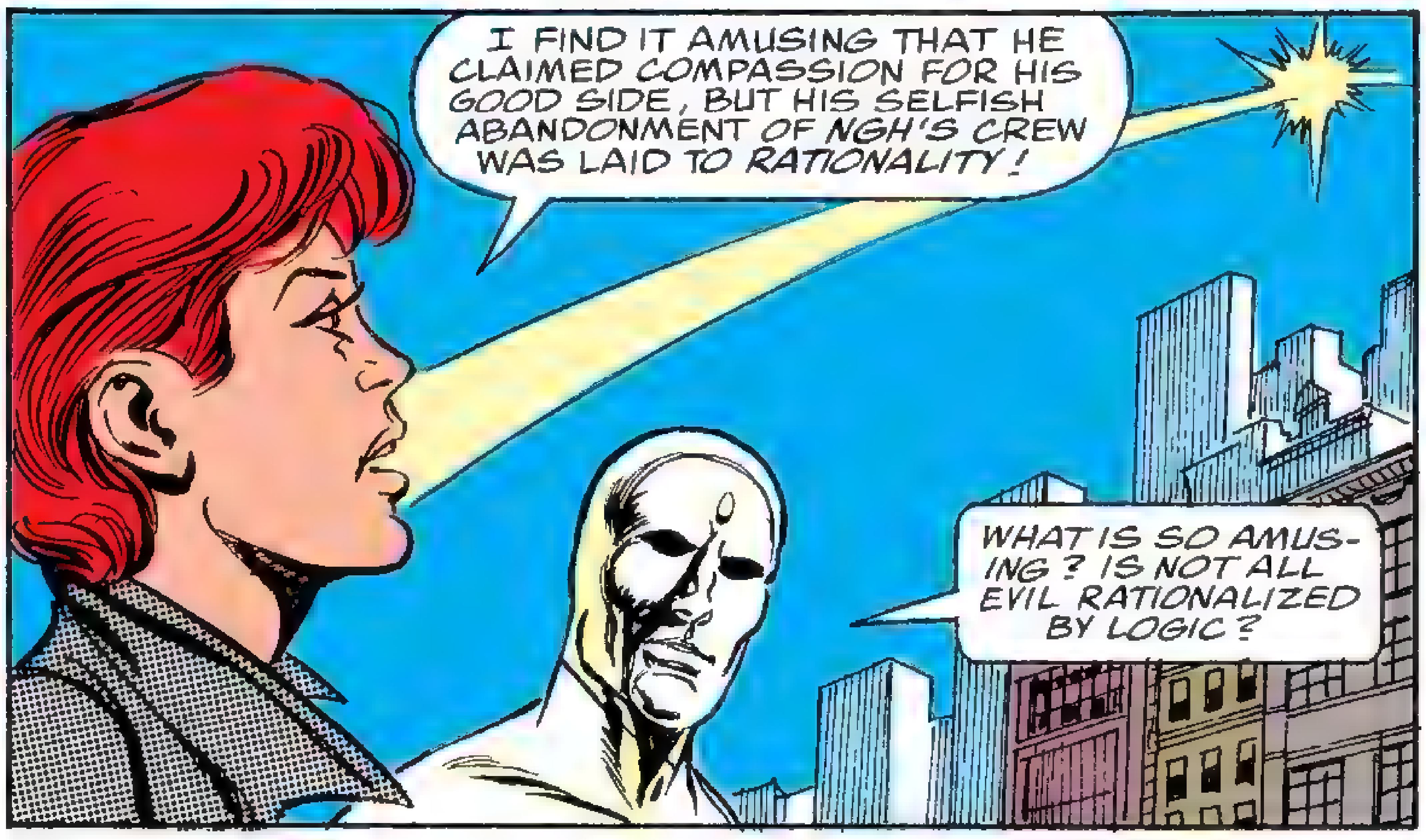

THEY STILL HAVE THE NEED TO REACH OUT, TO HELP THAT STRANGER...
THERE ARE ALL THE *LITTLE KINDNESSES* THAT ARE FORGOTTEN, THE FAVORS DONE WITH NO THOUGHT OF RESTITUTION...
...THE PROMISES KEPT, THOUGH THE KEEPING OF THEM WAS PAINFUL AND COSTLY. THESE ARE ALL THE INCREMENTS OF *MY* POWER, AND IT IS NO *LESS* THAN YOURS, *NGH!*
AND *MY* POWER *TRANSFIGURES* ME, JUST AS *YOUR* POWER *TRANSMUTES* YOU!
DO YOU *RECOGNIZE* ME NOW, IN THIS FORM, *NGH?* DO YOU *REMEMBER* THE *TRUTH* THAT YOU HAVE HIDDEN EVEN FROM *YOURSELF?*
NO! WHAT ARE YOU BLATHERING ON ABOUT? WHAT *TRUTH?*
IS THIS SOME *RUSE* TO GET ME OFF *GUARD?*
YOU DON'T REMEMBER AT ALL, DO YOU?
RAGE
IT IS TIME TO GIVE IT UP. THE GREAT *EXPERIMENT* IS OVER...

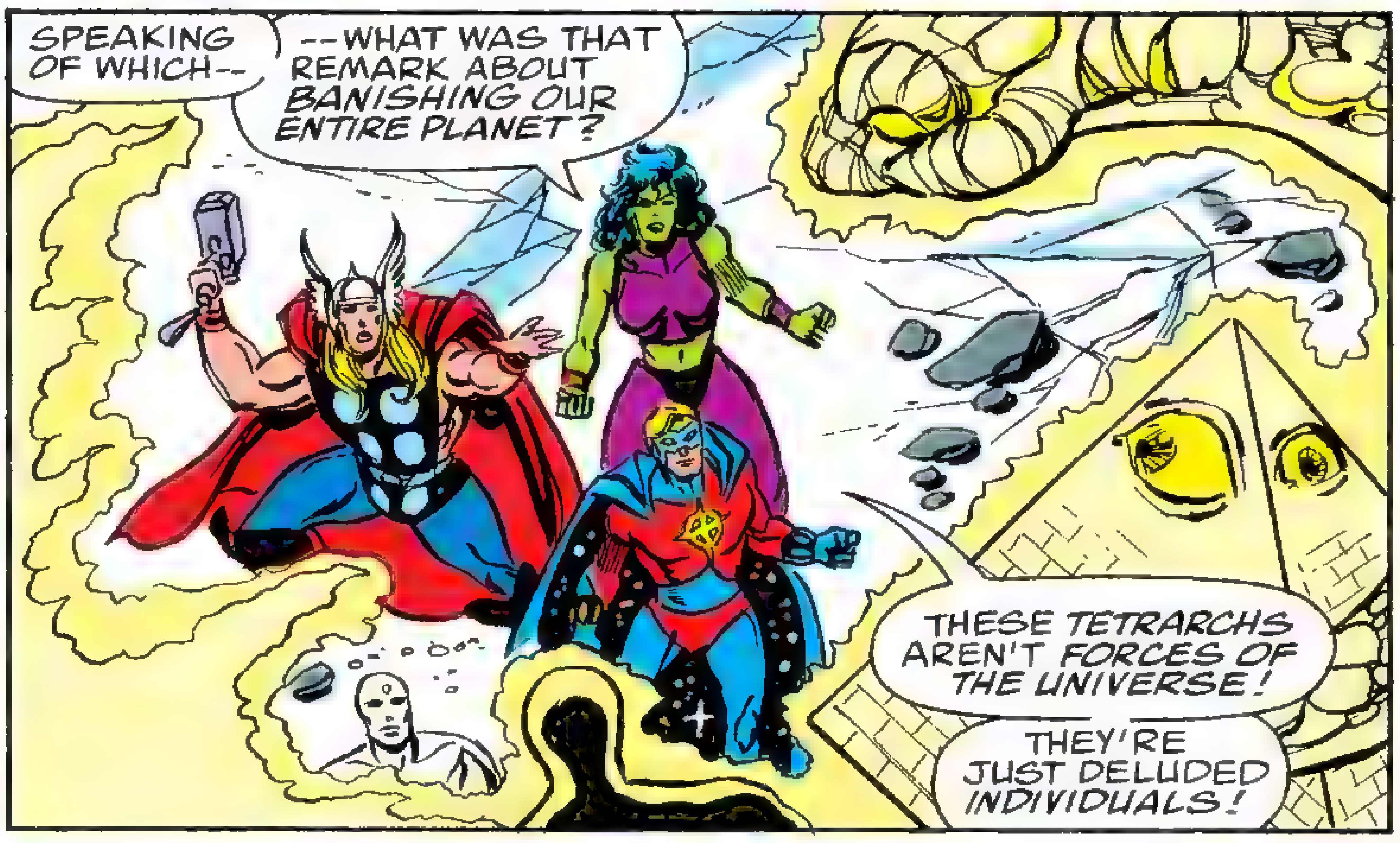

...AS LONG AS WE STAY SEPARATED, UPSTARTS LIKE THE TETRARCHS CAN OVERCOME US AND LOCK US AWAY! BESIDES, THE EXPERIMENT WAS NOT A COMPLETE SUCCESS, SINCE YOU RETAINED A RESIDUE OF GOOD IN XA, AND I RETAINED A RESIDUE OF EVIL IN THIS LITTLE WINGED ONE!
I-I REMEMBER! IT WAS SO LONG AGO...
THE EXPERIENCE WAS WELL WORTH IT, EVEN THE TEN THOUSAND YEARS OF IMPRISONMENT, BUT NOW IT IS TIME FOR OTHER THINGS!
YES! THIS PHASE OF OUR EXISTENCE IS OVER!
IT IS TIME...
...TO BE ONE AGAIN!
THEY ARE BLENDING TOGETHER!
THIS WAS AN ENTITY WHO DECIDED TO SPLIT ITSELF INTO ITS WHOLLY EVIL AND GOOD SIDES!
IT WAS SOMETHING I HAD TO DO, BUT NOW I HAVE DONE IT!
IT WAS UNFORTUNATE THAT I DID NOT FORESEE HOW THE TETRARCHS WOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MY LESSENED POWERS...

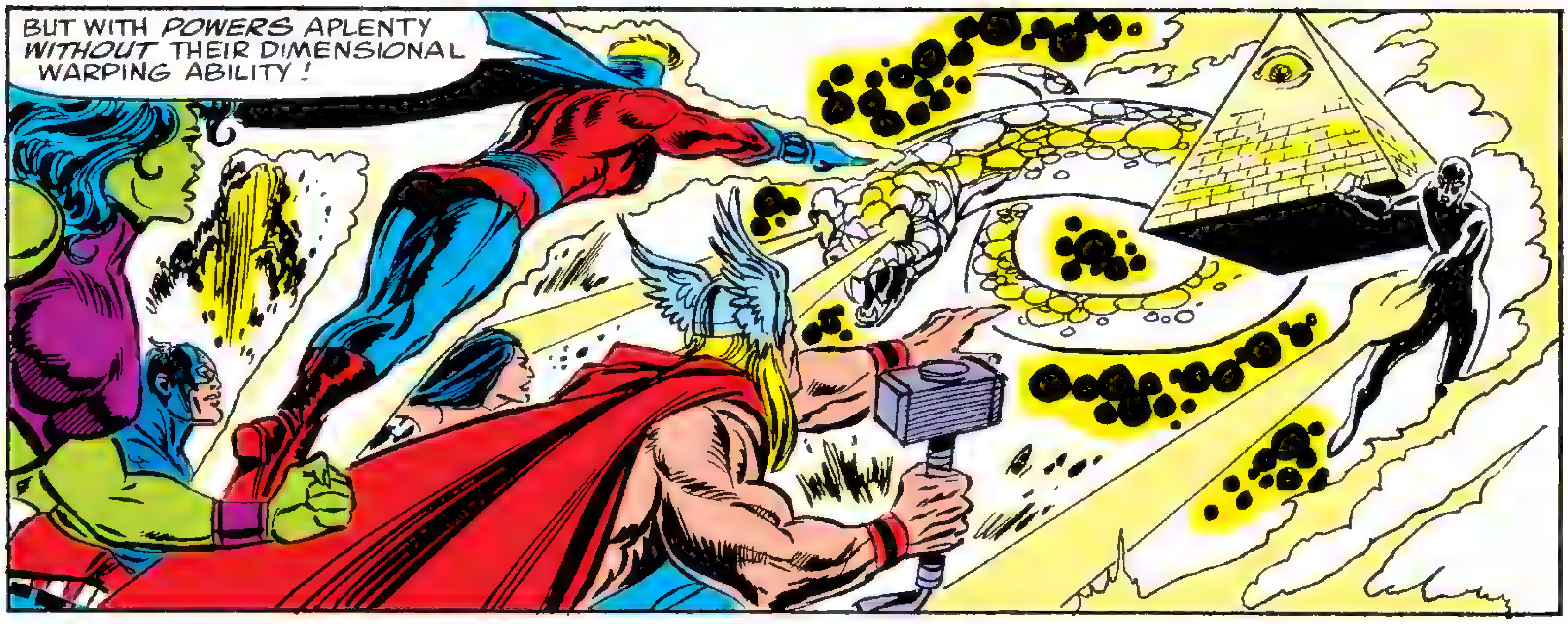

...BUT THAT IS A SITUATION THAT SHALL NOT REPEAT ITSELF!
I CERTAINLY CAN'T PERMIT THE TETRARCHS OF ENTROPY TO PLAY WITH DIMENSIONAL DOORWAYS IN THE FUTURE, THE PAST, OR ANY SIDE-BRANCH OF THE TIME-STREAM.
AARRRRGGHH!
I AM NULLIFYING YOUR ABILITY TO PASS BETWEEN THE REALITIES. THE TETRARCHS ARE OUT OF THE BANISHING BUSINESS FOR GOOD.
ENTROPY, INDEED! HOW COULD THE UNIVERSES THAT ARE EXPANDING BE SLIPPING TOWARDS CHAOS? THINGS THAT ARE FLYING AWAY FROM EACH OTHER AT GREAT SPEEDS ARE ACQUIRING ORDER OF A SORT! AT LEAST IN THIS REALITY!
WHAT ABOUT US?
UNIVERSES ARE BEYOND OUR SCALE OF COMPREHENSION!
WHAT IS TO BECOME OF US? WE WHO WERE THE THRALLS OF NGH AND ARE EVEN NOW REVERTING TO OUR TRUE FORMS!
NGH MADE PROMISES TO US AND NGH IS A PART OF YOU! SOME OF US ARE FROM DISTANT GALAXIES, OTHER REALITIES OR FAR FLUNG TIMES! ARE WE TO BE ABANDONED?
THE GOOD SIDE OF ME FEELS COMPASSION FOR YOUR PLIGHT...

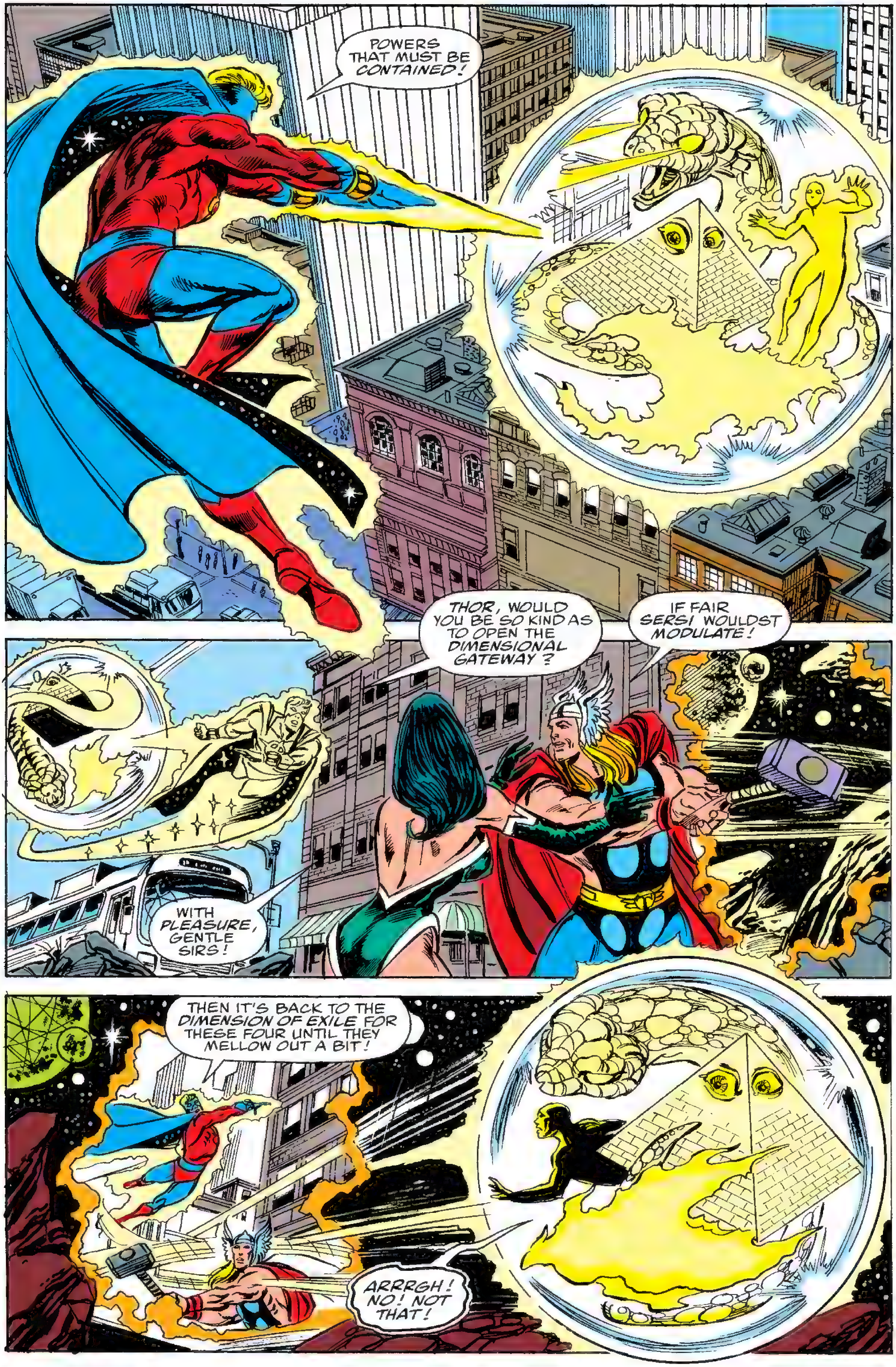

...BUT THE *RATIONAL* SIDE KNOWS RESTITUTION WOULD BE *IMPRACTICAL*!
BESIDES, I HAVE MUCH MORE IMPORTANT, HIGH PROFILE THINGS TO DO, SUCH AS SAVING ENTIRE CIVILIZATIONS...

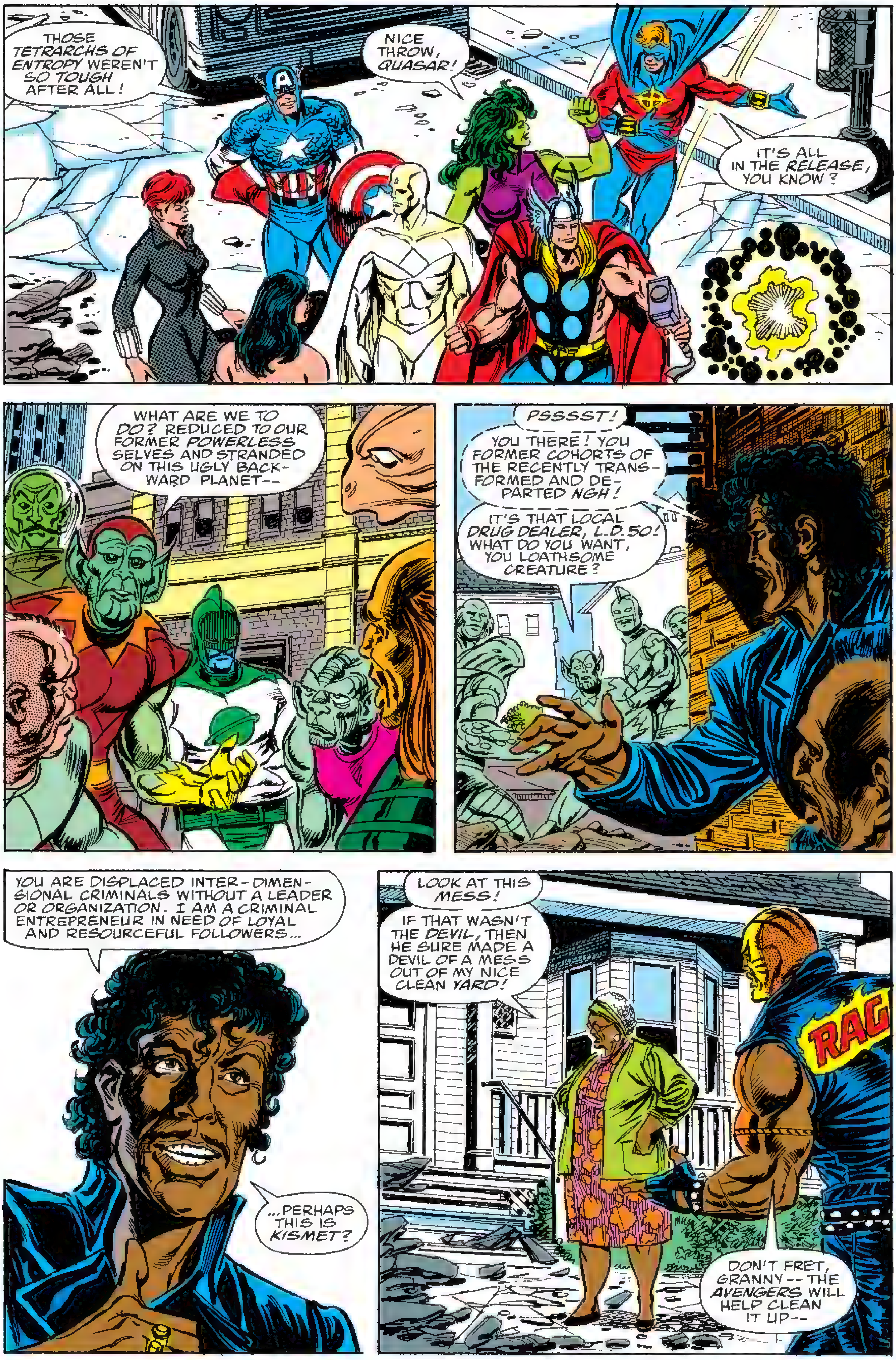

...AND BASKING IN THE *PRAISE*.

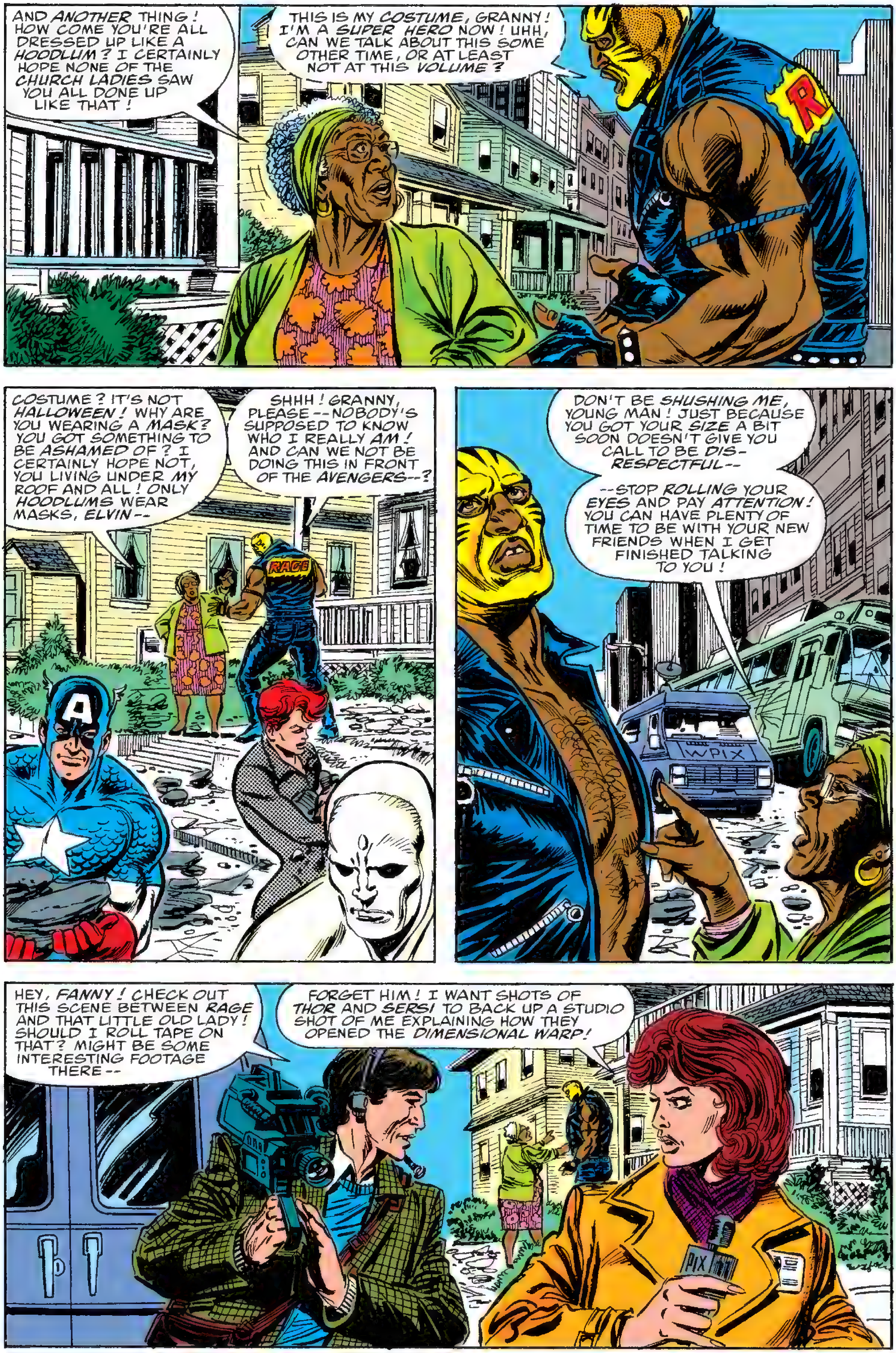

I FIND IT AMUSING THAT HE CLAIMED COMPASSION FOR HIS GOOD SIDE, BUT HIS SELFISH ABANDONMENT OF *NGH'S CREW* WAS LAID TO *RATIONALITY*!
WHAT IS SO AMUSING? IS NOT ALL EVIL RATIONALIZED BY LOGIC?

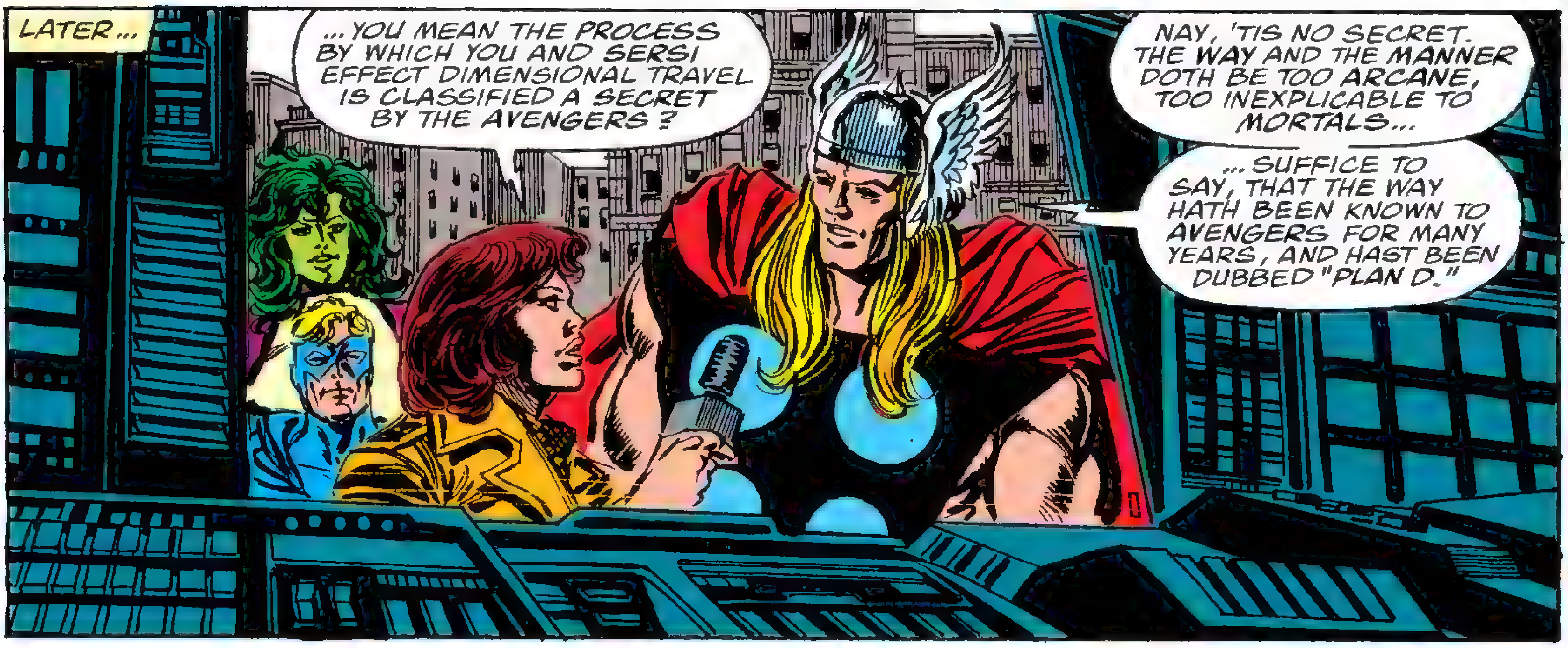

SPEAKING OF WHICH--
--WHAT WAS THAT REMARK ABOUT *BANISHING OUR ENTIRE PLANET*?
THESE *TETRARCHS* AREN'T *FORCES OF THE UNIVERSE*!
THEY'RE JUST DELUDED *INDIVIDUALS*!

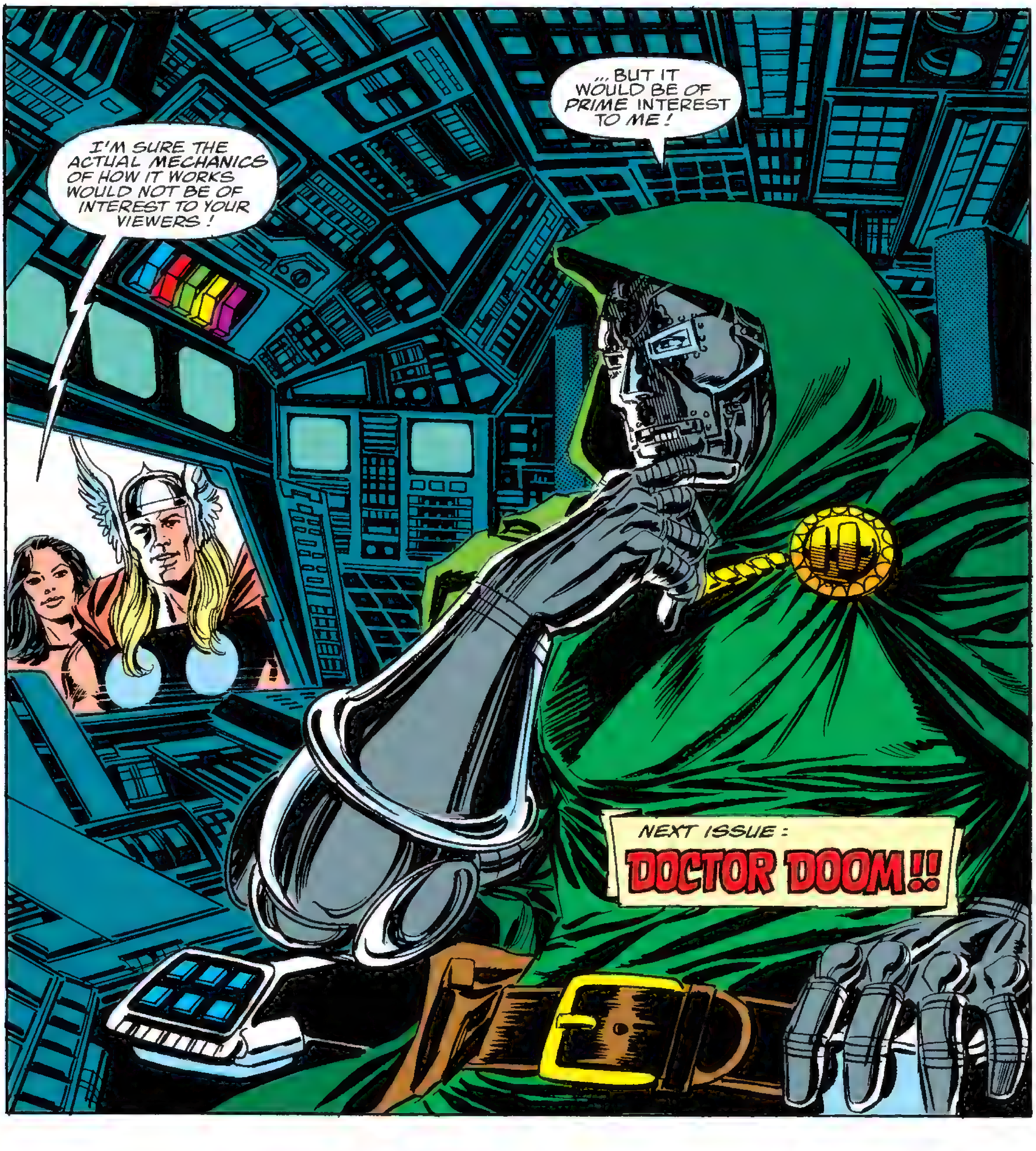

BUT WITH *POWERS* APLENTY *WITHOUT* THEIR DIMENSIONAL WARPING ABILITY!


POWERS THAT MUST BE *CONTAINED!*
THOR, WOULD YOU BE SO KIND AS TO OPEN THE *DIMENSIONAL GATEWAY?*
IF FAIR *SERSI* WOULDST *MODULATE!*
WITH *PLEASURE*, GENTLE SIRS!
THEN IT'S BACK TO THE *DIMENSION OF EXILE* FOR THESE FOUR UNTIL THEY MELLOW OUT A BIT!
ARRRGH! NO! NOT THAT!


THOSE *TETRARCHS OF ENTROPY* WEREN'T *SO TOUGH* AFTER ALL!
NICE THROW, *QUASAR!*
IT'S ALL IN THE *RELEASE*, YOU KNOW?
WHAT ARE WE TO *DO?* REDUCED TO OUR FORMER *POWERLESS* SELVES AND STRANDED ON THIS UGLY BACKWARD PLANET--
PSSSST!
YOU THERE! YOU FORMER COHORTS OF THE RECENTLY TRANSFORMED AND DEPARTED *NGH!*
IT'S THAT LOCAL *DRUG DEALER, L.D.50!* WHAT DO YOU WANT, YOU LOATHSOME CREATURE?
YOU ARE DISPLACED INTER-DIMENSIONAL CRIMINALS WITHOUT A LEADER OR ORGANIZATION. I AM A CRIMINAL ENTREPRENEUR IN NEED OF LOYAL AND RESOURCEFUL FOLLOWERS...
...PERHAPS THIS IS *KISMET?*
LOOK AT THIS *MESS!*
IF THAT WASN'T THE *DEVIL*, THEN HE SURE MADE A DEVIL OF A MESS OUT OF MY NICE CLEAN *YARD!*
RAG
DON'T FRET, GRANNY -- THE *AVENGERS* WILL HELP CLEAN IT UP--


AND ANOTHER THING! HOW COME YOU'RE ALL DRESSED UP LIKE A HOODLUM? I CERTAINLY HOPE NONE OF THE CHURCH LADIES SAW YOU ALL DONE UP LIKE THAT!
THIS IS MY COSTUME, GRANNY! I'M A SUPER HERO NOW! UHH, CAN WE TALK ABOUT THIS SOME OTHER TIME, OR AT LEAST NOT AT THIS VOLUME?
R
COSTUME? IT'S NOT HALLOWEEN! WHY ARE YOU WEARING A MASK? YOU GOT SOMETHING TO BE ASHAMED OF? I CERTAINLY HOPE NOT, YOU LIVING UNDER MY ROOF AND ALL! ONLY HOODLUMS WEAR MASKS, ELVIN--
SHHH! GRANNY, PLEASE--NOBODY'S SUPPOSED TO KNOW WHO I REALLY AM! AND CAN WE NOT BE DOING THIS IN FRONT OF THE AVENGERS--?
RAGE
A
DON'T BE SHUSHING ME, YOUNG MAN! JUST BECAUSE YOU GOT YOUR SIZE A BIT SOON DOESN'T GIVE YOU CALL TO BE DIS-RESPECTFUL--
--STOP ROLLING YOUR EYES AND PAY ATTENTION! YOU CAN HAVE PLENTY OF TIME TO BE WITH YOUR NEW FRIENDS WHEN I GET FINISHED TALKING TO YOU!
WPIX
HEY, FANNY! CHECK OUT THIS SCENE BETWEEN RAGE AND THAT LITTLE OLD LADY! SHOULD I ROLL TAPE ON THAT? MIGHT BE SOME INTERESTING FOOTAGE THERE--
FORGET HIM! I WANT SHOTS OF THOR AND SERSI TO BACK UP A STUDIO SHOT OF ME EXPLAINING HOW THEY OPENED THE DIMENSIONAL WARP!
PIX


LATER...
...YOU MEAN THE PROCESS BY WHICH YOU AND SERSI EFFECT DIMENSIONAL TRAVEL IS CLASSIFIED A SECRET BY THE AVENGERS?
NAY, 'TIS NO SECRET. THE WAY AND THE MANNER DOTH BE TOO ARCANE, TOO INEXPLICABLE TO MORTALS...
...SUFFICE TO SAY, THAT THE WAY HATH BEEN KNOWN TO AVENGERS FOR MANY YEARS, AND HAST BEEN DUBBED "PLAN D."


I'M SURE THE ACTUAL MECHANICS OF HOW IT WORKS WOULD NOT BE OF INTEREST TO YOUR VIEWERS!
...BUT IT WOULD BE OF PRIME INTEREST TO ME!
NEXT ISSUE:
DOCTOR DOOM!!

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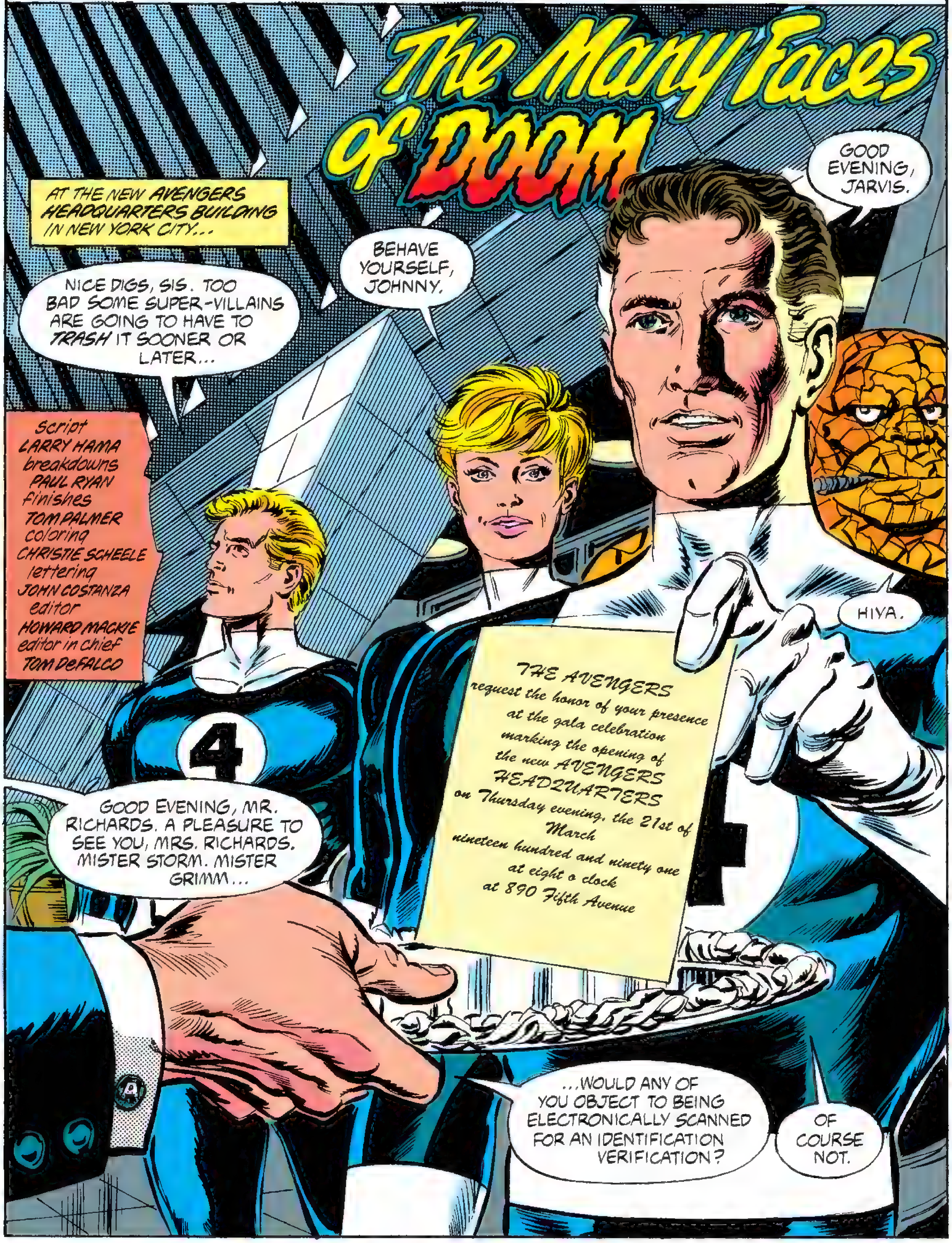
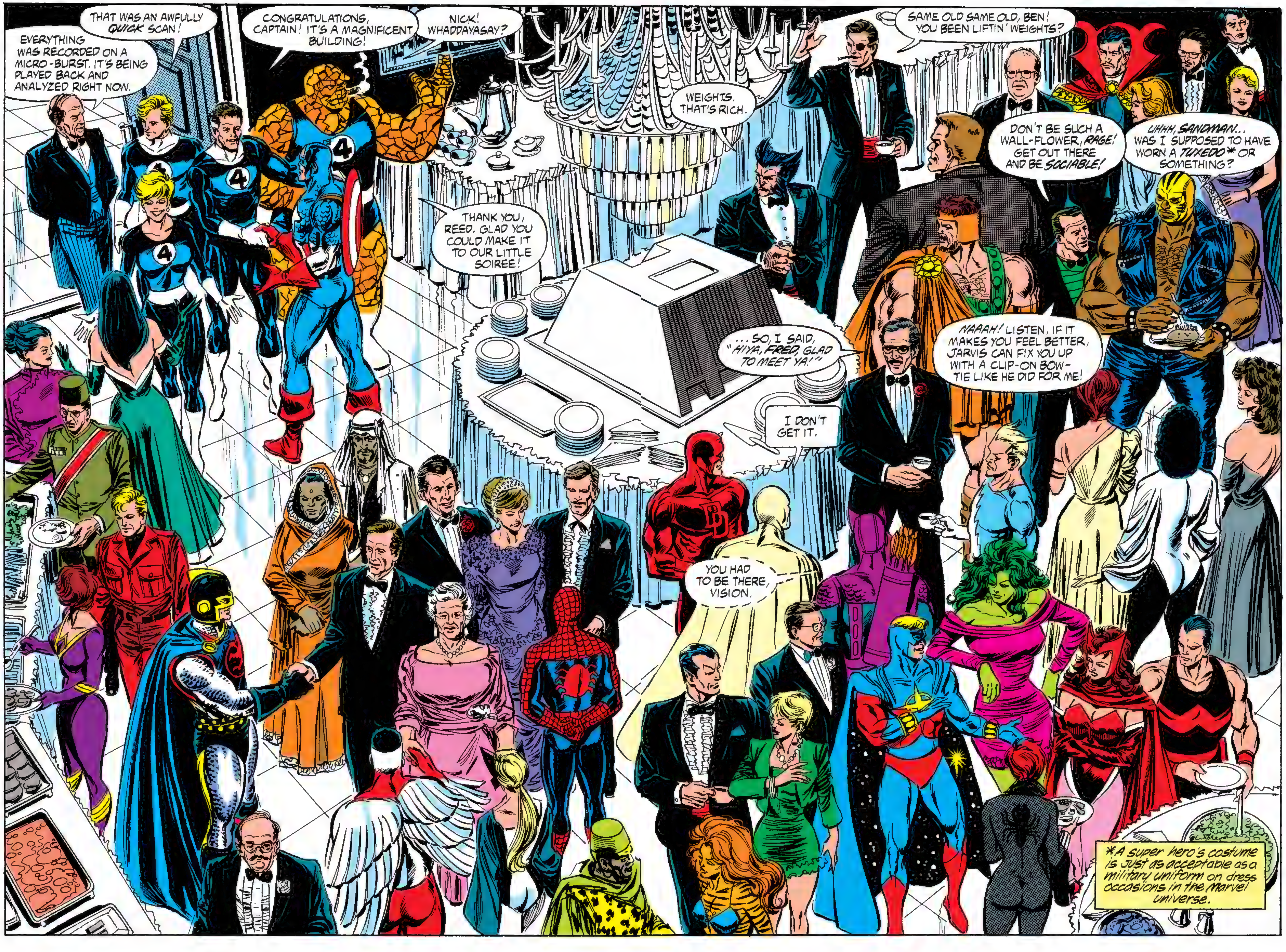
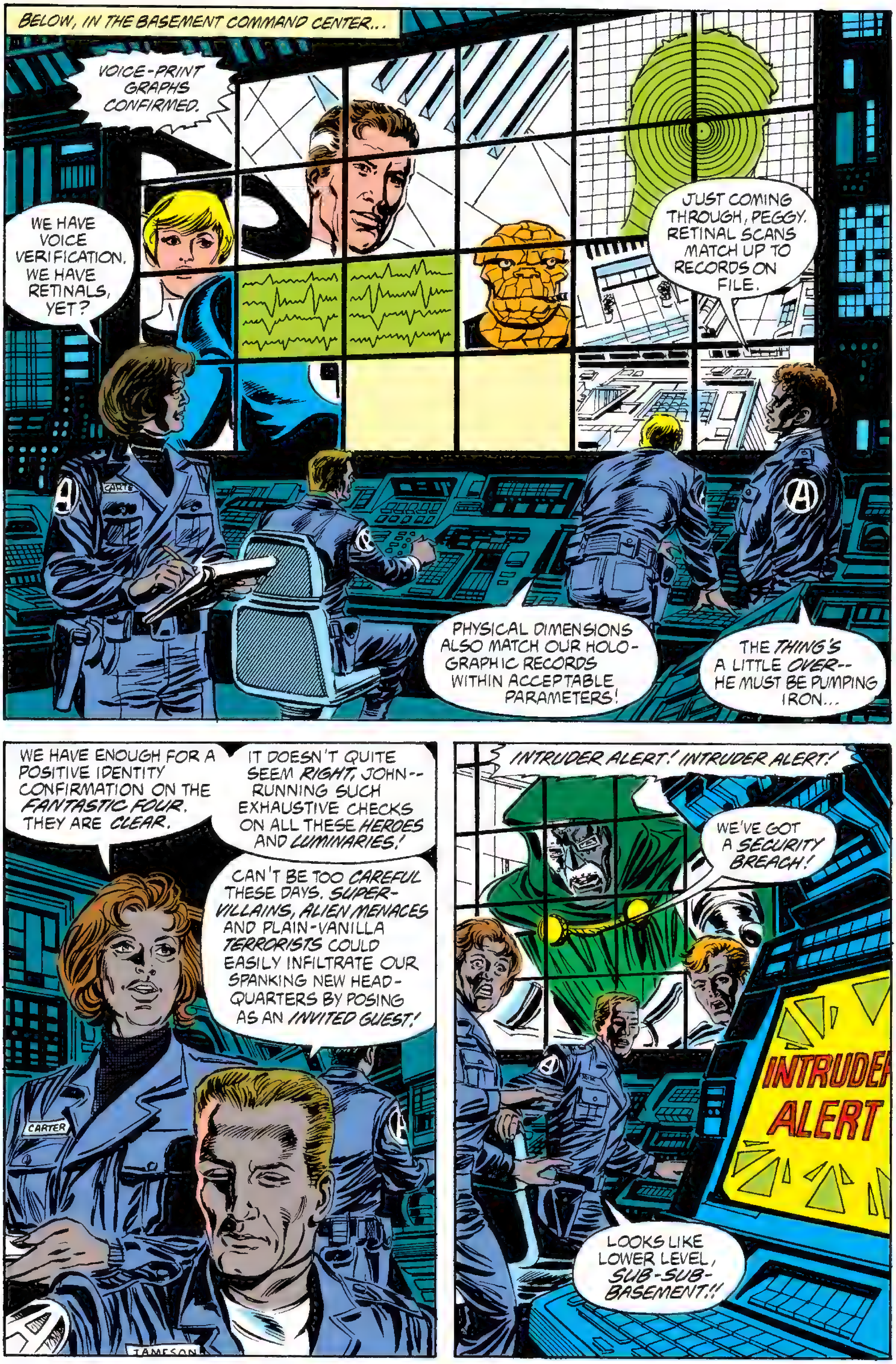
TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND!

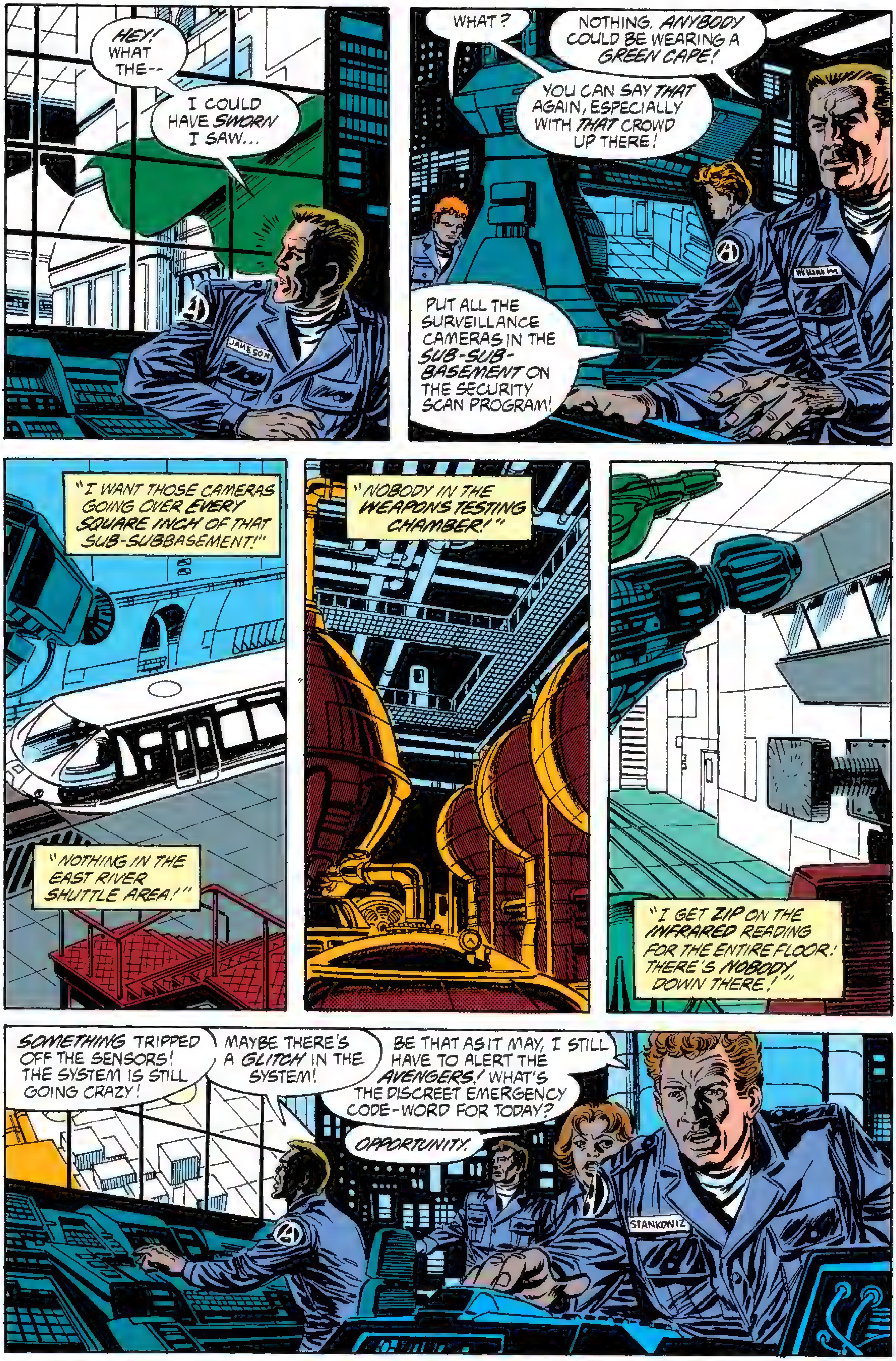
STAN LEE PRESENTS . . . THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

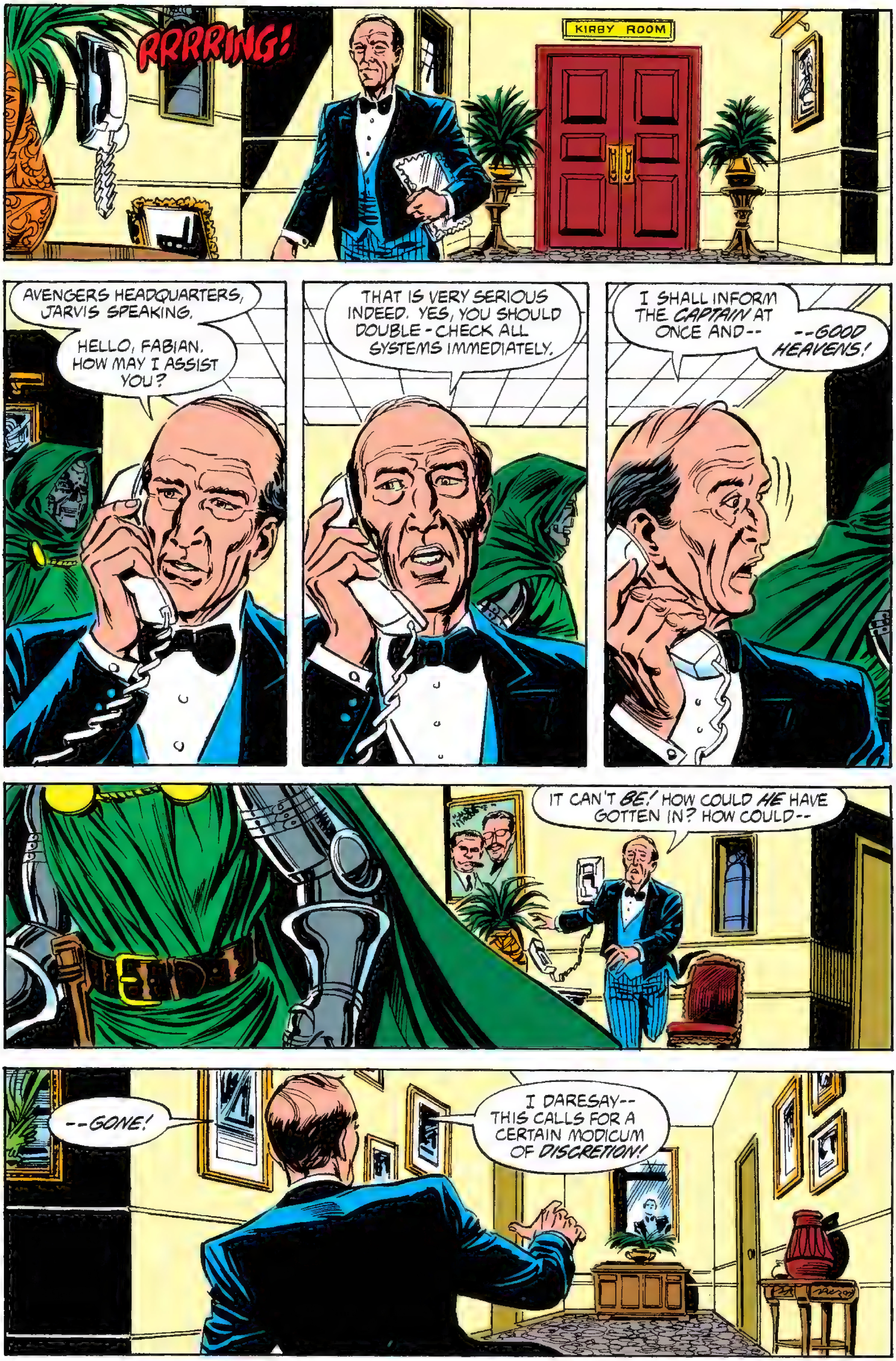
The Many Faces of DOOM

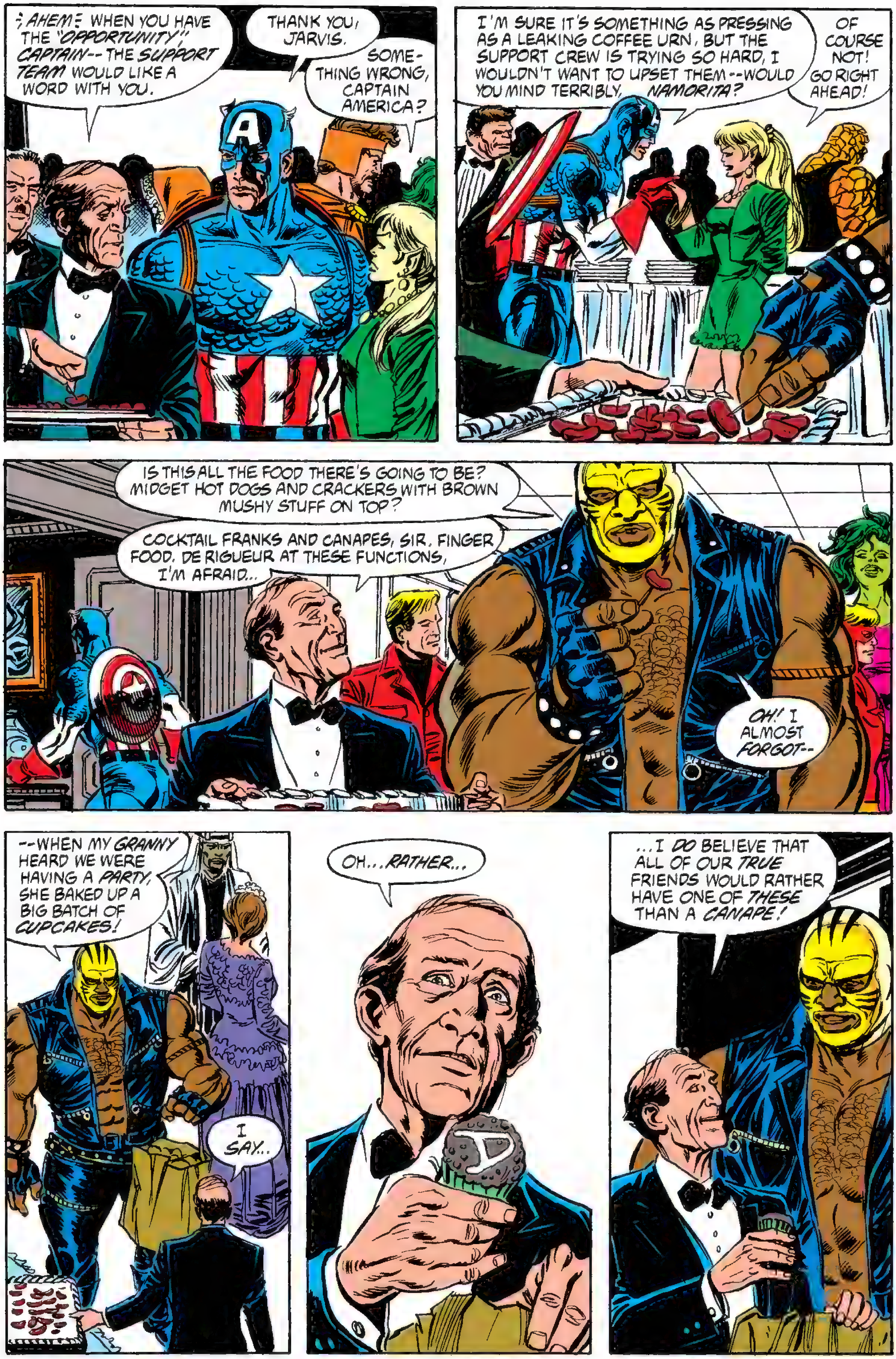

AT THE NEW AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS BUILDING IN NEW YORK CITY...
NICE DIGS, SIS. TOO BAD SOME SUPER-VILLAINS ARE GOING TO HAVE TO TRASH IT SOONER OR LATER...
BEHAVE YOURSELF, JOHNNY.
GOOD EVENING, JARVIS.
script LARRY HAMA breakdowns PAUL RYAN finishes TOM PALMER coloring CHRISTIE SCHEELE lettering JOHN COSTANZA editor HOWARD MACKIE editor in chief TOM DeFALCO
HIYA.
THE AVENGERS request the honor of your presence at the gala celebration marking the opening of the new AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS on Thursday evening, the 21st of March nineteen hundred and ninety one at eight o clock at 890 Fifth Avenue
GOOD EVENING, MR. RICHARDS. A PLEASURE TO SEE YOU, MRS. RICHARDS. MISTER STORM. MISTER GRIMM...
...WOULD ANY OF YOU OBJECT TO BEING ELECTRONICALLY SCANNED FOR AN IDENTIFICATION VERIFICATION?
OF COURSE NOT.

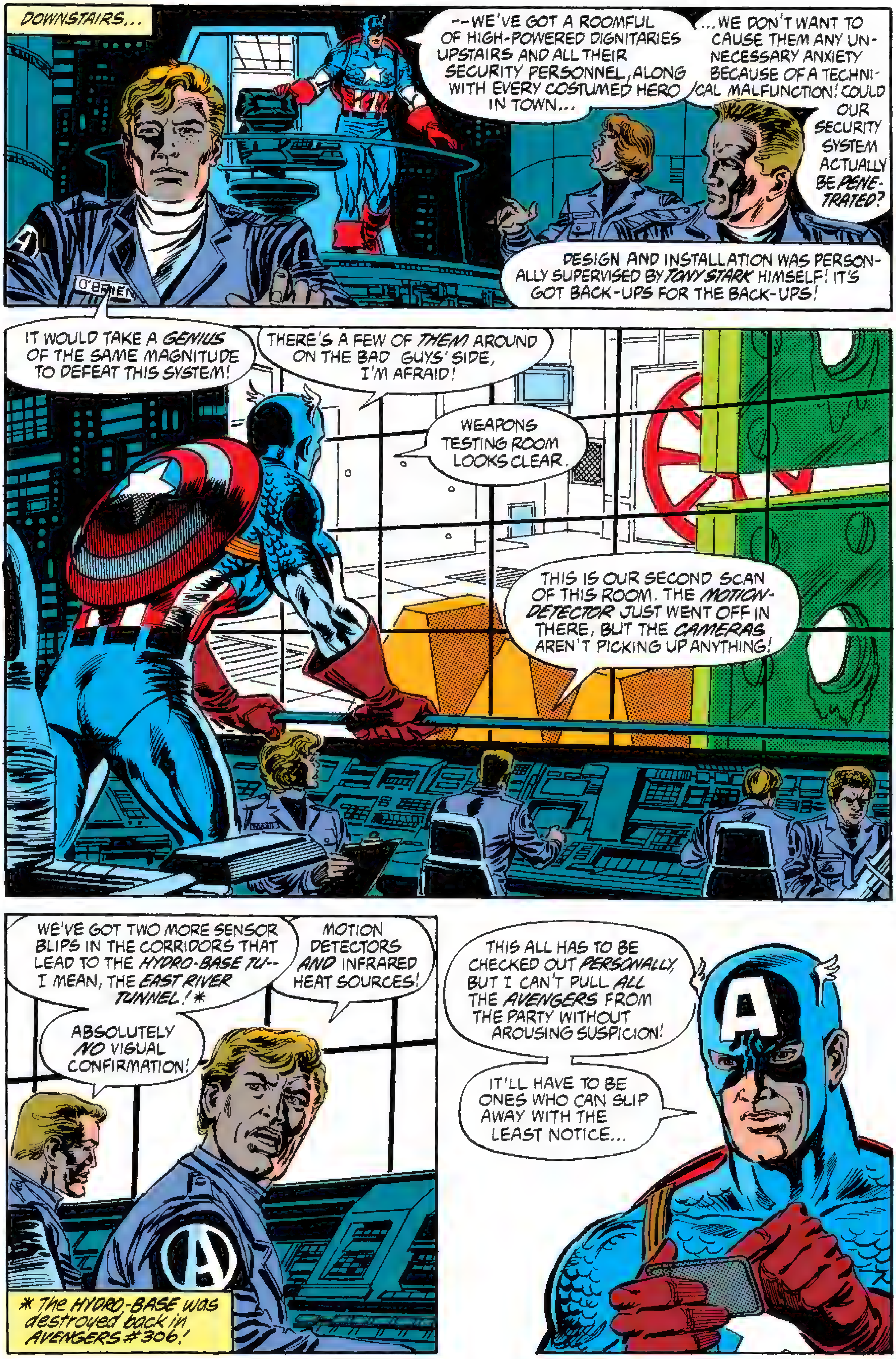

EVERYTHING WAS RECORDED ON A MICRO-BURST. IT'S BEING PLAYED BACK AND ANALYZED RIGHT NOW.
THAT WAS AN AWFULLY *QUICK* SCAN!
CONGRATULATIONS, CAPTAIN! IT'S A MAGNIFICENT BUILDING!
NICK! WHADDAYASAY?
SAME OLD SAME OLD, BEN! YOU BEEN LIFTIN' WEIGHTS?
WEIGHTS. THAT'S RICH.
THANK YOU, REED. GLAD YOU COULD MAKE IT TO OUR LITTLE SOIREE!
DON'T BE SUCH A WALL-FLOWER, *RAGE!* GET OUT THERE AND BE *SOCIABLE!*
UHHH, SANDMAN... WAS I SUPPOSED TO HAVE WORN A *TUXEDO** OR SOMETHING?
NAAAH! LISTEN, IF IT MAKES YOU FEEL BETTER, JARVIS CAN FIX YOU UP WITH A CLIP-ON BOW-TIE LIKE HE DID FOR ME!
...SO, I SAID, "*HIYA, FRED,* GLAD TO MEET YA!"
I DON'T GET IT.
YOU HAD TO BE THERE, VISION.
*A super hero's costume is just as acceptable as a military uniform on dress occasions in the Marvel universe.

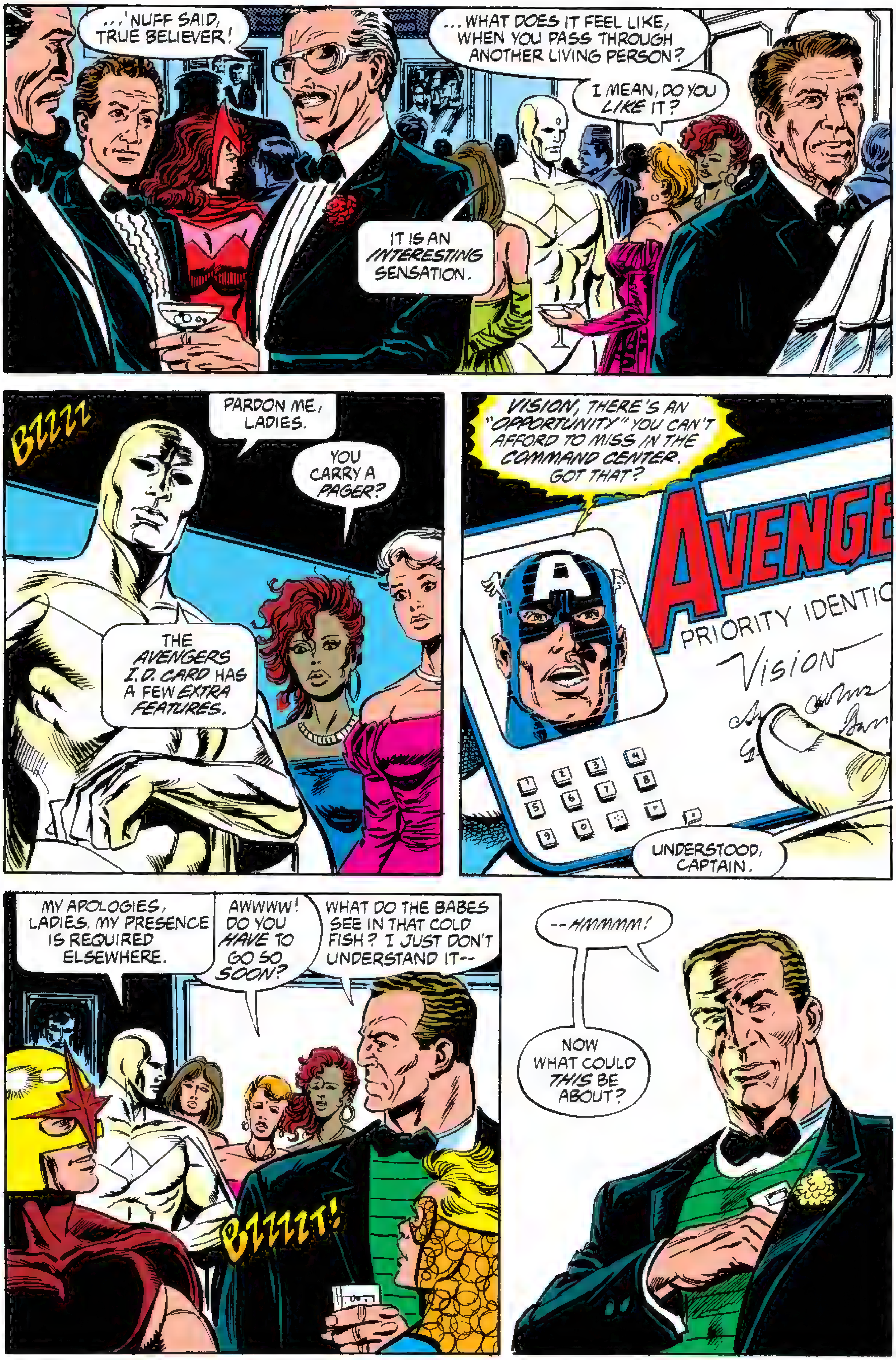

BELOW, IN THE BASEMENT COMMAND CENTER...
VOICE-PRINT GRAPHS CONFIRMED.
WE HAVE VOICE VERIFICATION. WE HAVE RETINALS, YET?
JUST COMING THROUGH, PEGGY. RETINAL SCANS MATCH UP TO RECORDS ON FILE.
PHYSICAL DIMENSIONS ALSO MATCH OUR HOLOGRAPHIC RECORDS WITHIN ACCEPTABLE PARAMETERS!
THE THING'S A LITTLE OVER-- HE MUST BE PUMPING IRON...
WE HAVE ENOUGH FOR A POSITIVE IDENTITY CONFIRMATION ON THE FANTASTIC FOUR. THEY ARE CLEAR.
IT DOESN'T QUITE SEEM RIGHT, JOHN-- RUNNING SUCH EXHAUSTIVE CHECKS ON ALL THESE HEROES AND LUMINARIES!
CAN'T BE TOO CAREFUL THESE DAYS. SUPER-VILLAINS, ALIEN MENACES AND PLAIN-VANILLA TERRORISTS COULD EASILY INFILTRATE OUR SPANKING NEW HEADQUARTERS BY POSING AS AN INVITED GUEST!
CARTER
JAMESON
INTRUDER ALERT! INTRUDER ALERT!
WE'VE GOT A SECURITY BREACH!
INTRUDER ALERT
LOOKS LIKE LOWER LEVEL, SUB-SUB-BASEMENT!!

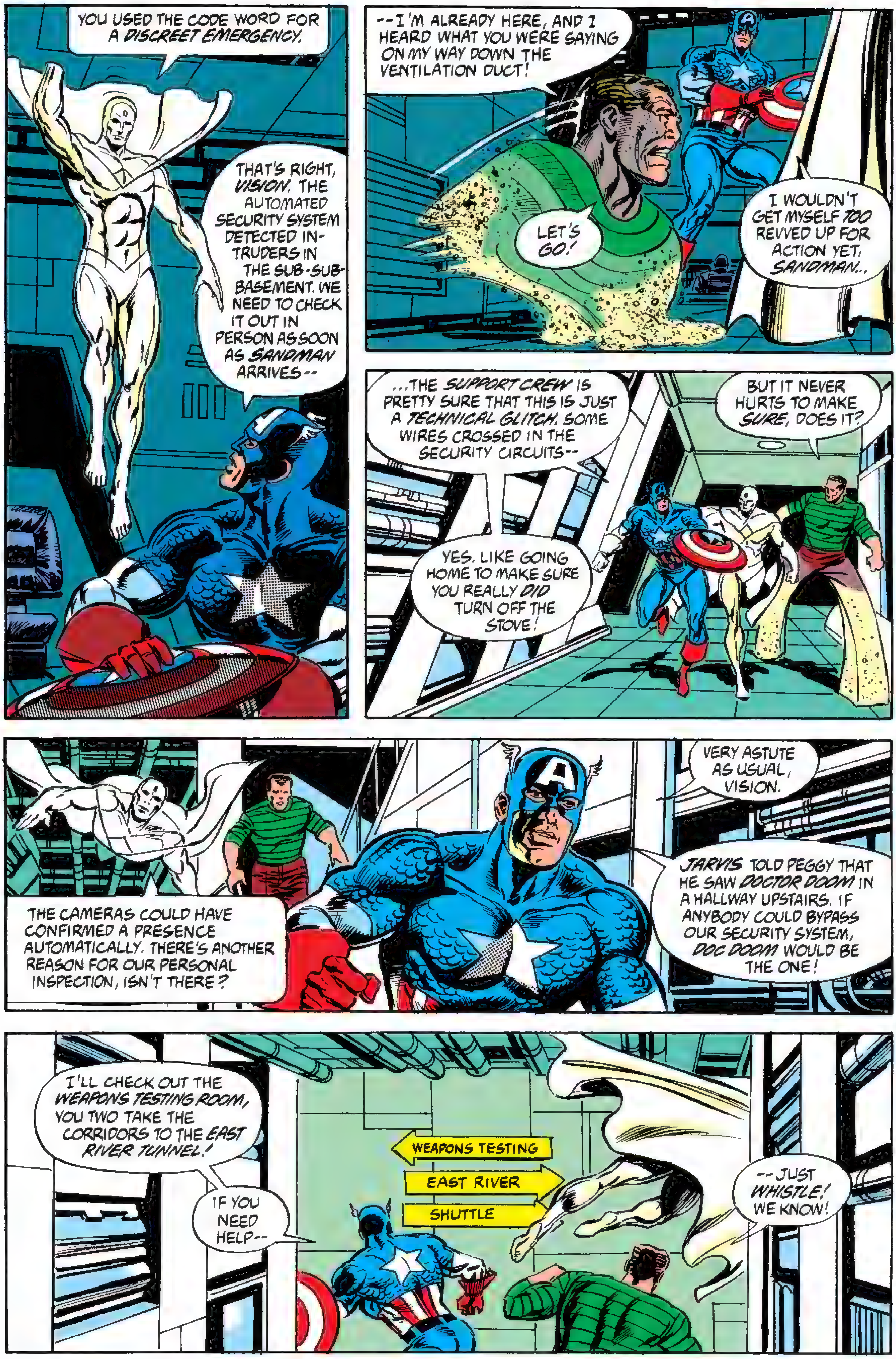

HEY! WHAT THE--
I COULD HAVE SWORN I SAW...
JAMESON
WHAT?
NOTHING. ANYBODY COULD BE WEARING A GREEN CAPE!
YOU CAN SAY THAT AGAIN, ESPECIALLY WITH THAT CROWD UP THERE!
PUT ALL THE SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS IN THE SUB-SUB-BASEMENT ON THE SECURITY SCAN PROGRAM!
"I WANT THOSE CAMERAS GOING OVER EVERY SQUARE INCH OF THAT SUB-SUBBASEMENT!"
"NOTHING IN THE EAST RIVER SHUTTLE AREA!"
"NOBODY IN THE WEAPONS TESTING CHAMBER!"
"I GET ZIP ON THE INFRARED READING FOR THE ENTIRE FLOOR! THERE'S NOBODY DOWN THERE!"
SOMETHING TRIPPED OFF THE SENSORS! THE SYSTEM IS STILL GOING CRAZY!
MAYBE THERE'S A GLITCH IN THE SYSTEM!
BE THAT AS IT MAY, I STILL HAVE TO ALERT THE AVENGERS! WHAT'S THE DISCREET EMERGENCY CODE-WORD FOR TODAY?
OPPORTUNITY.
STANKOWIZ

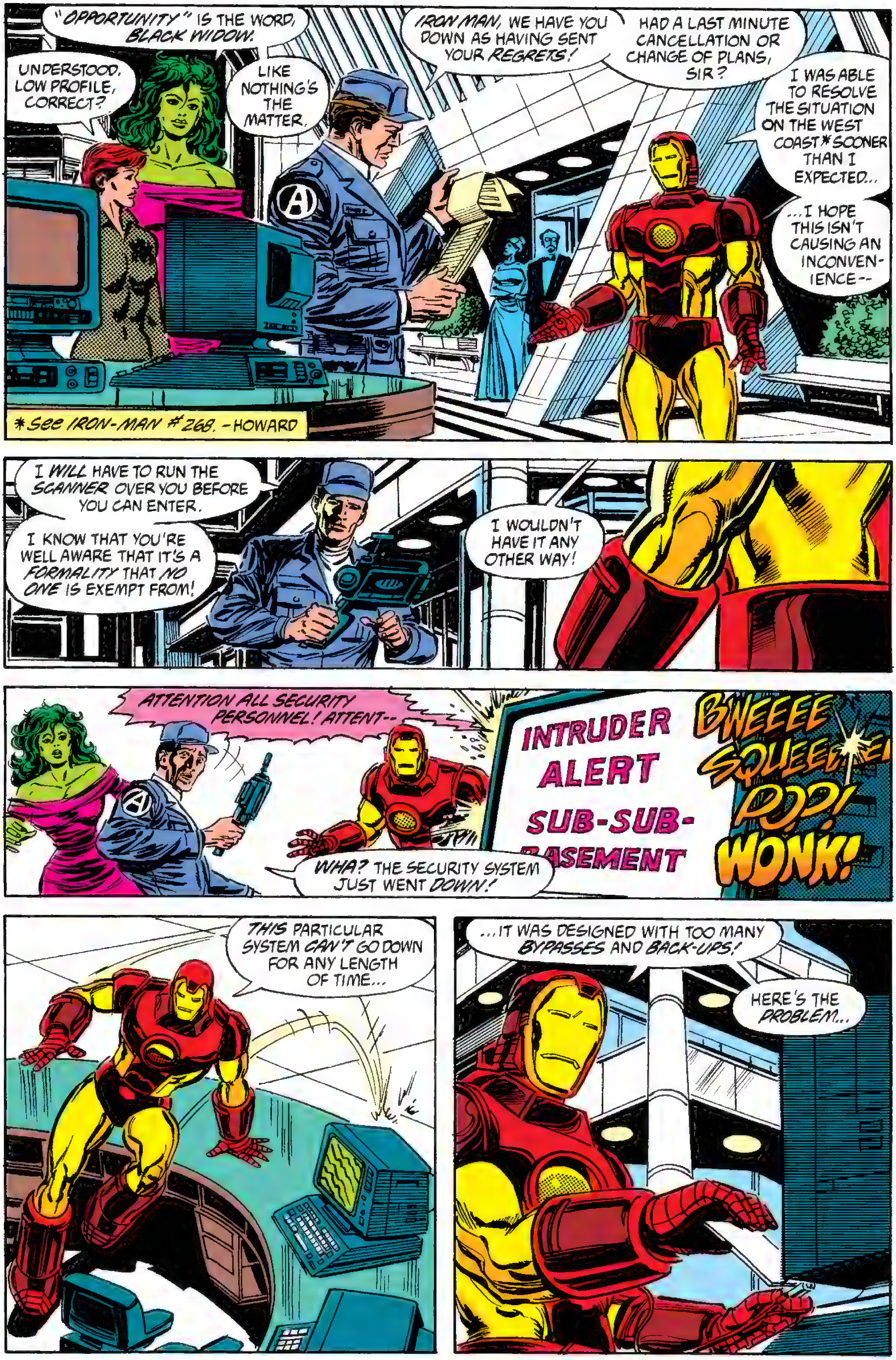

RRRRING!
KIRBY ROOM
AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS, JARVIS SPEAKING.
HELLO, FABIAN. HOW MAY I ASSIST YOU?
THAT IS VERY SERIOUS INDEED. YES, YOU SHOULD DOUBLE-CHECK ALL SYSTEMS IMMEDIATELY.
I SHALL INFORM THE *CAPTAIN* AT ONCE AND--
--*GOOD HEAVENS!*
IT CAN'T *BE!* HOW COULD *HE* HAVE GOTTEN IN? HOW COULD--
--*GONE!*
I DARESAY-- THIS CALLS FOR A CERTAIN MODICUM OF *DISCRETION!*

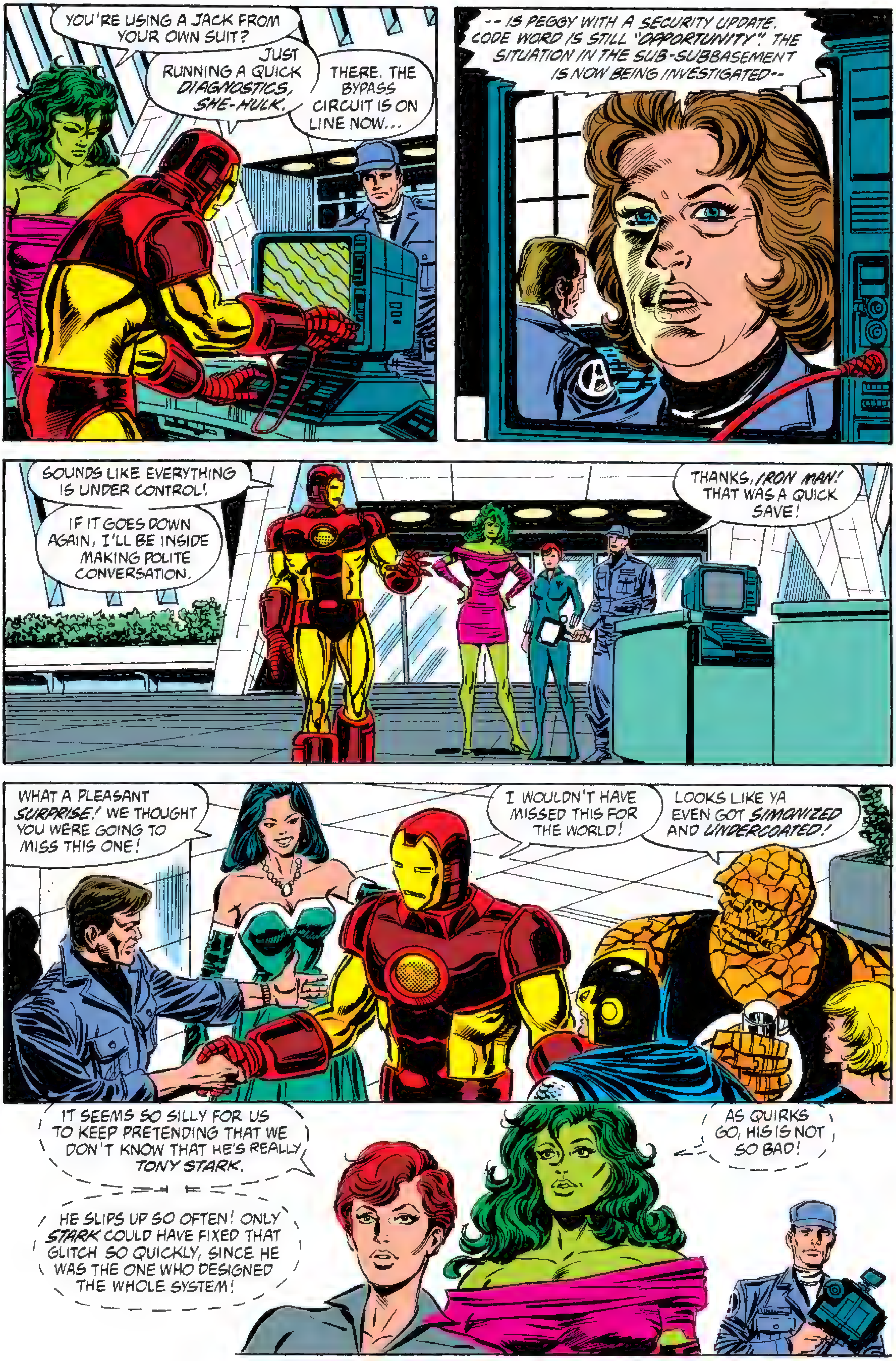

AHEM WHEN YOU HAVE THE "OPPORTUNITY," CAPTAIN-- THE SUPPORT TEAM WOULD LIKE A WORD WITH YOU.
THANK YOU, JARVIS.
SOME-THING WRONG, CAPTAIN AMERICA?
I'M SURE IT'S SOMETHING AS PRESSING AS A LEAKING COFFEE URN, BUT THE SUPPORT CREW IS TRYING SO HARD, I WOULDN'T WANT TO UPSET THEM--WOULD YOU MIND TERRIBLY, NAMORITA?
OF COURSE NOT! GO RIGHT AHEAD!
IS THIS ALL THE FOOD THERE'S GOING TO BE? MIDGET HOT DOGS AND CRACKERS WITH BROWN MUSHY STUFF ON TOP?
COCKTAIL FRANKS AND CANAPES, SIR. FINGER FOOD. DE RIGUEUR AT THESE FUNCTIONS, I'M AFRAID...
OH! I ALMOST FORGOT--
--WHEN MY GRANNY HEARD WE WERE HAVING A PARTY, SHE BAKED UP A BIG BATCH OF CUPCAKES!
I SAY...
OH... RATHER...
...I DO BELIEVE THAT ALL OF OUR TRUE FRIENDS WOULD RATHER HAVE ONE OF THESE THAN A CANAPE!

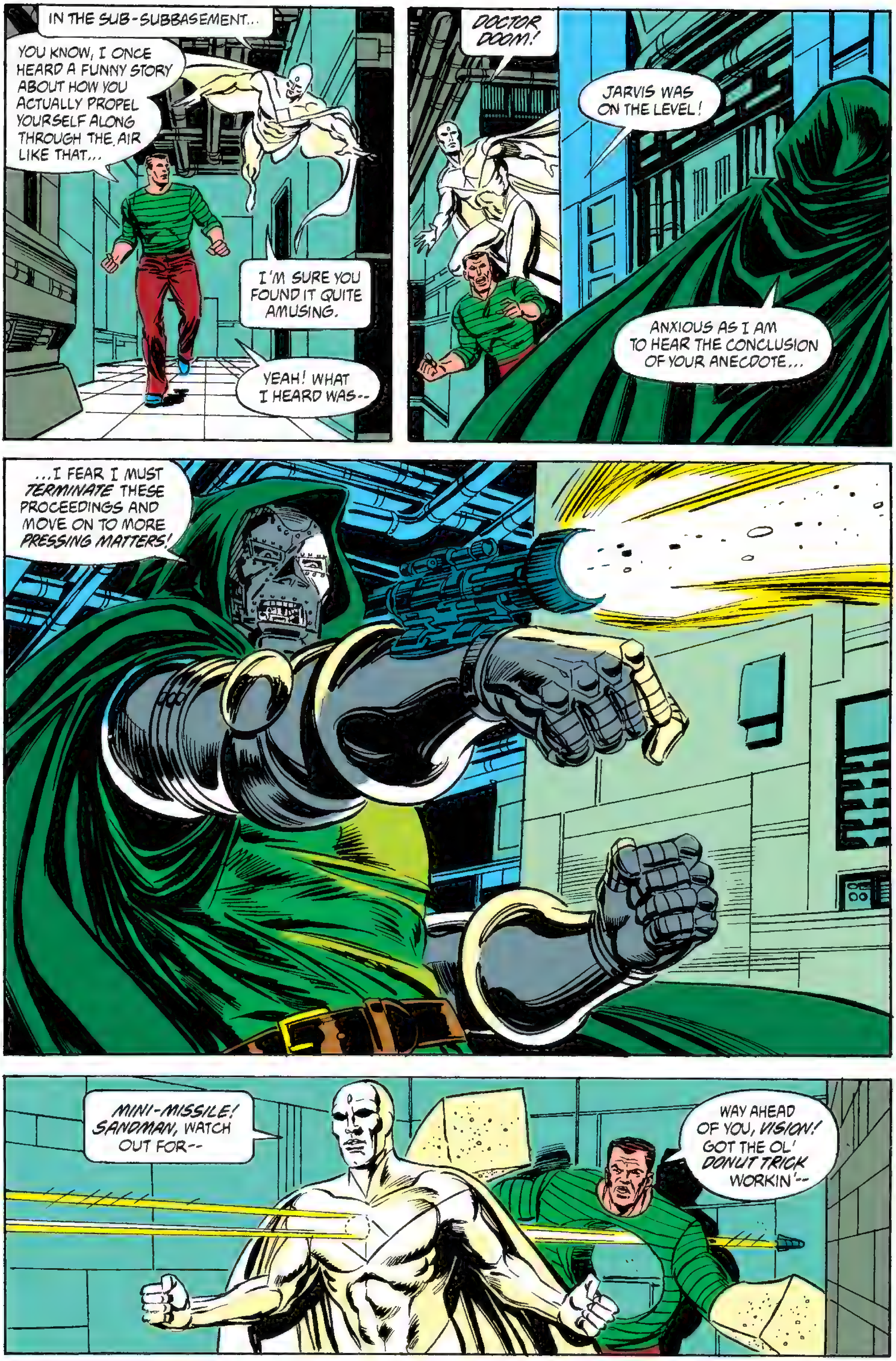

DOWNSTAIRS...
--WE'VE GOT A ROOMFUL OF HIGH-POWERED DIGNITARIES UPSTAIRS AND ALL THEIR SECURITY PERSONNEL, ALONG WITH EVERY COSTUMED HERO IN TOWN...
...WE DON'T WANT TO CAUSE THEM ANY UNNECESSARY ANXIETY BECAUSE OF A TECHNICAL MALFUNCTION! COULD OUR SECURITY SYSTEM ACTUALLY BE *PENETRATED?*
DESIGN AND INSTALLATION WAS PERSONALLY SUPERVISED BY *TONY STARK* HIMSELF! IT'S GOT BACK-UPS FOR THE BACK-UPS!
O'BRIEN
IT WOULD TAKE A *GENIUS* OF THE SAME MAGNITUDE TO DEFEAT THIS SYSTEM!
THERE'S A FEW OF *THEM* AROUND ON THE BAD GUYS' SIDE, I'M AFRAID!
WEAPONS TESTING ROOM LOOKS CLEAR.
THIS IS OUR SECOND SCAN OF THIS ROOM. THE *MOTION-DETECTOR* JUST WENT OFF IN THERE, BUT THE *CAMERAS* AREN'T PICKING UP ANYTHING!
WE'VE GOT TWO MORE SENSOR BLIPS IN THE CORRIDORS THAT LEAD TO THE *HYDRO-BASE TU--* I MEAN, THE *EAST RIVER TUNNEL!* *
MOTION DETECTORS *AND* INFRARED HEAT SOURCES!
ABSOLUTELY *NO* VISUAL CONFIRMATION!
* The HYDRO-BASE was destroyed back in AVENGERS #306!
THIS ALL HAS TO BE CHECKED OUT *PERSONALLY*, BUT I CAN'T PULL *ALL* THE *AVENGERS* FROM THE PARTY WITHOUT AROUSING SUSPICION!
IT'LL HAVE TO BE ONES WHO CAN SLIP AWAY WITH THE LEAST NOTICE...

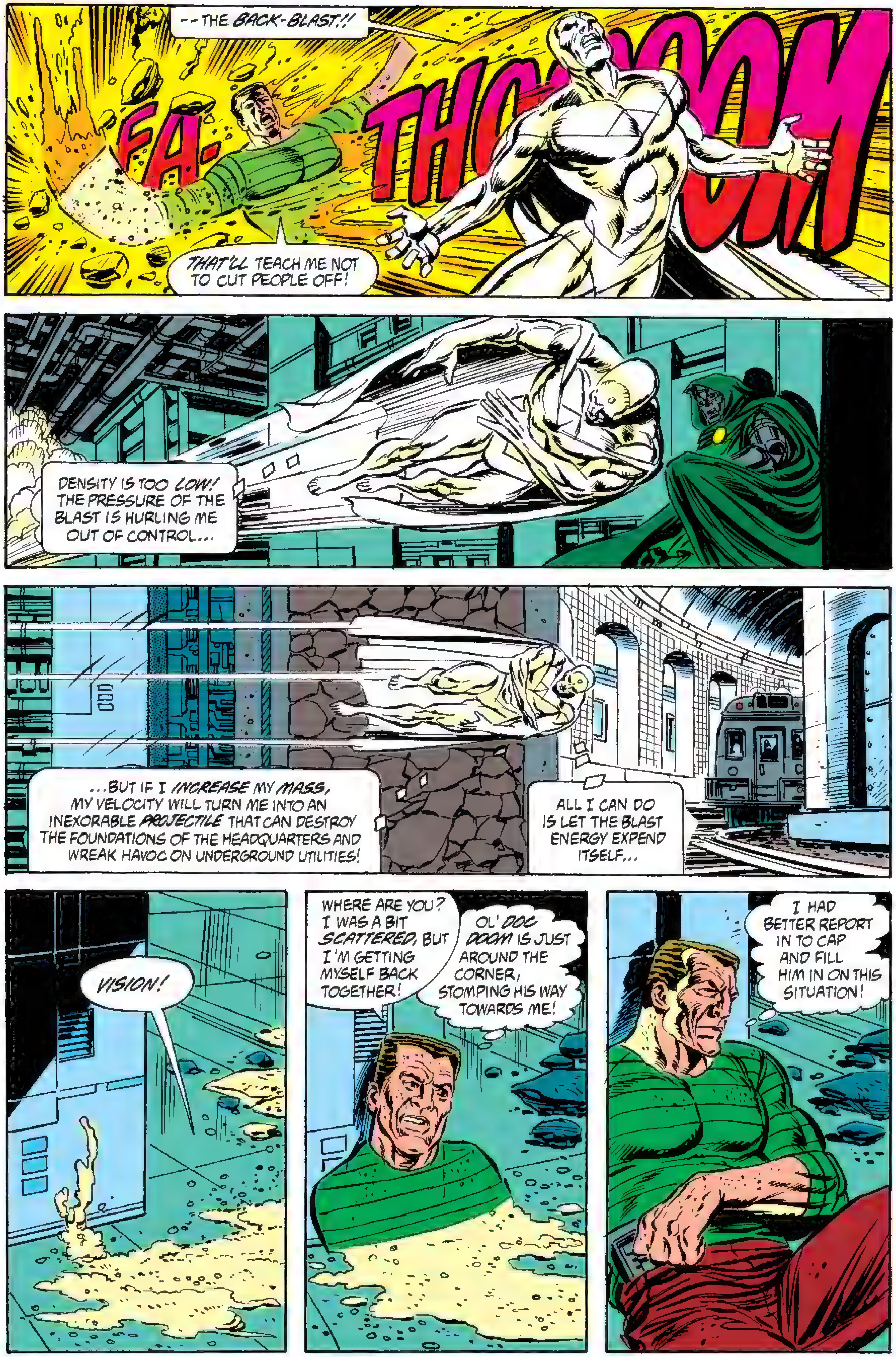

...'NUFF SAID, TRUE BELIEVER!
...WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE, WHEN YOU PASS THROUGH ANOTHER LIVING PERSON?
I MEAN, DO YOU *LIKE* IT?
IT IS AN *INTERESTING* SENSATION.
BZZZZ
PARDON ME, LADIES.
YOU CARRY A *PAGER*?
THE *AVENGERS I.D. CARD* HAS A FEW *EXTRA FEATURES*.
VISION, THERE'S AN *"OPPORTUNITY"* YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO MISS IN THE *COMMAND CENTER*. GOT THAT?
AVENGE
PRIORITY IDENTIC
Vision
UNDERSTOOD, CAPTAIN.
MY APOLOGIES, LADIES. MY PRESENCE IS REQUIRED ELSEWHERE.
AWWWW! DO YOU *HAVE* TO GO SO *SOON*?
WHAT DO THE BABES SEE IN THAT COLD FISH? I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND IT--
BZZZZT!
--*HMMMM!*
NOW WHAT COULD *THIS* BE ABOUT?

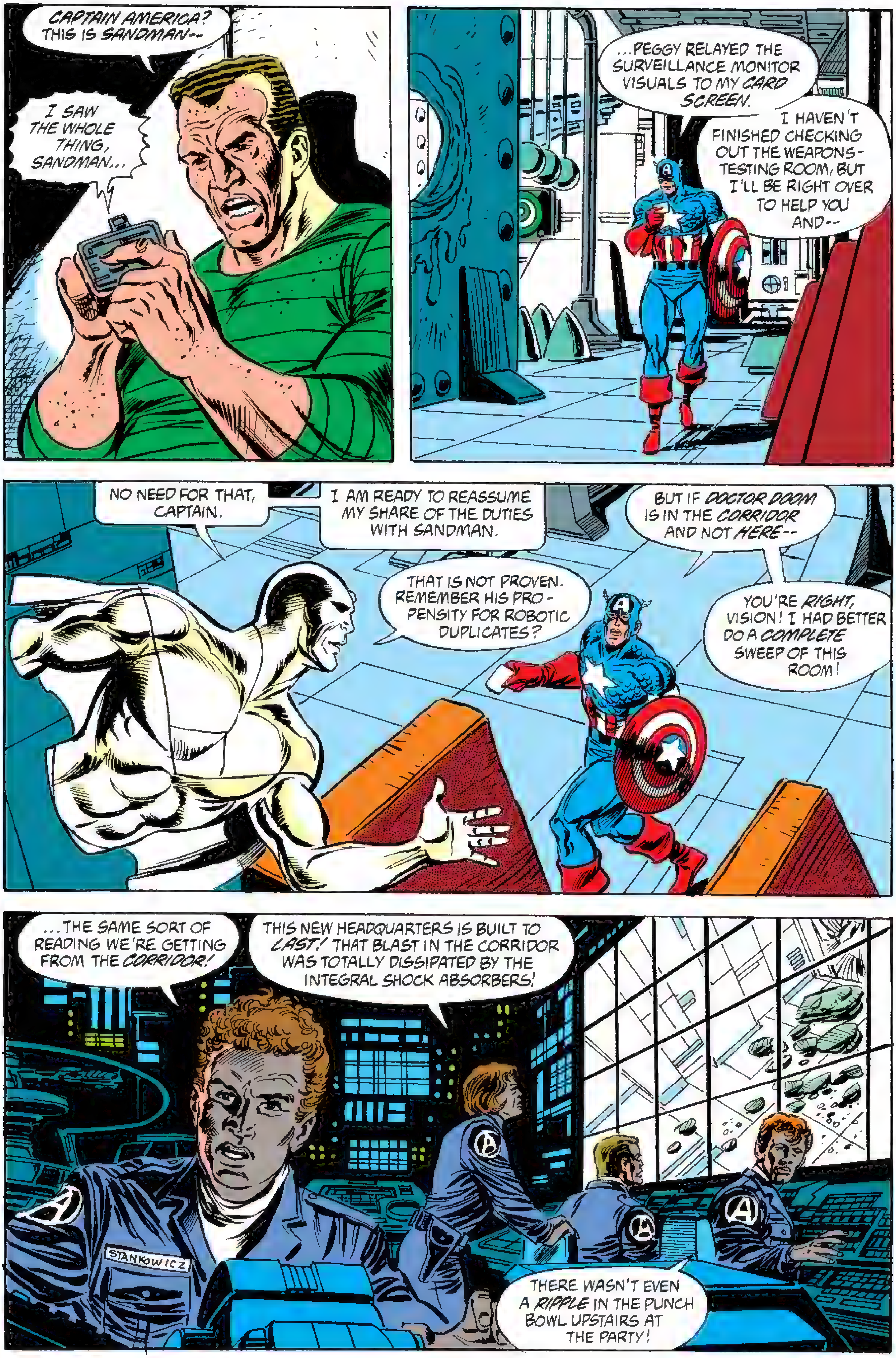

YOU USED THE CODE WORD FOR A *DISCREET EMERGENCY.*
THAT'S RIGHT, *VISION.* THE AUTOMATED SECURITY SYSTEM DETECTED INTRUDERS IN THE SUB-SUB-BASEMENT. WE NEED TO CHECK IT OUT IN PERSON AS SOON AS *SANDMAN* ARRIVES--
--I'M ALREADY HERE, AND I HEARD WHAT YOU WERE SAYING ON MY WAY DOWN THE VENTILATION DUCT!
LET'S *GO!*
I WOULDN'T GET MYSELF *TOO* REVVED UP FOR ACTION YET, *SANDMAN...*
...THE *SUPPORT CREW* IS PRETTY SURE THAT THIS IS JUST A *TECHNICAL GLITCH.* SOME WIRES CROSSED IN THE SECURITY CIRCUITS--
BUT IT NEVER HURTS TO MAKE *SURE,* DOES IT?
YES. LIKE GOING HOME TO MAKE SURE YOU REALLY *DID* TURN OFF THE STOVE!
THE CAMERAS COULD HAVE CONFIRMED A PRESENCE AUTOMATICALLY. THERE'S ANOTHER REASON FOR OUR PERSONAL INSPECTION, ISN'T THERE?
VERY ASTUTE AS USUAL, VISION.
JARVIS TOLD PEGGY THAT HE SAW *DOCTOR DOOM* IN A HALLWAY UPSTAIRS. IF ANYBODY COULD BYPASS OUR SECURITY SYSTEM, *DOC DOOM* WOULD BE THE ONE!
I'LL CHECK OUT THE *WEAPONS TESTING ROOM,* YOU TWO TAKE THE CORRIDORS TO THE *EAST RIVER TUNNEL!*
WEAPONS TESTING
EAST RIVER
SHUTTLE
IF YOU NEED HELP--
--JUST *WHISTLE!* WE KNOW!

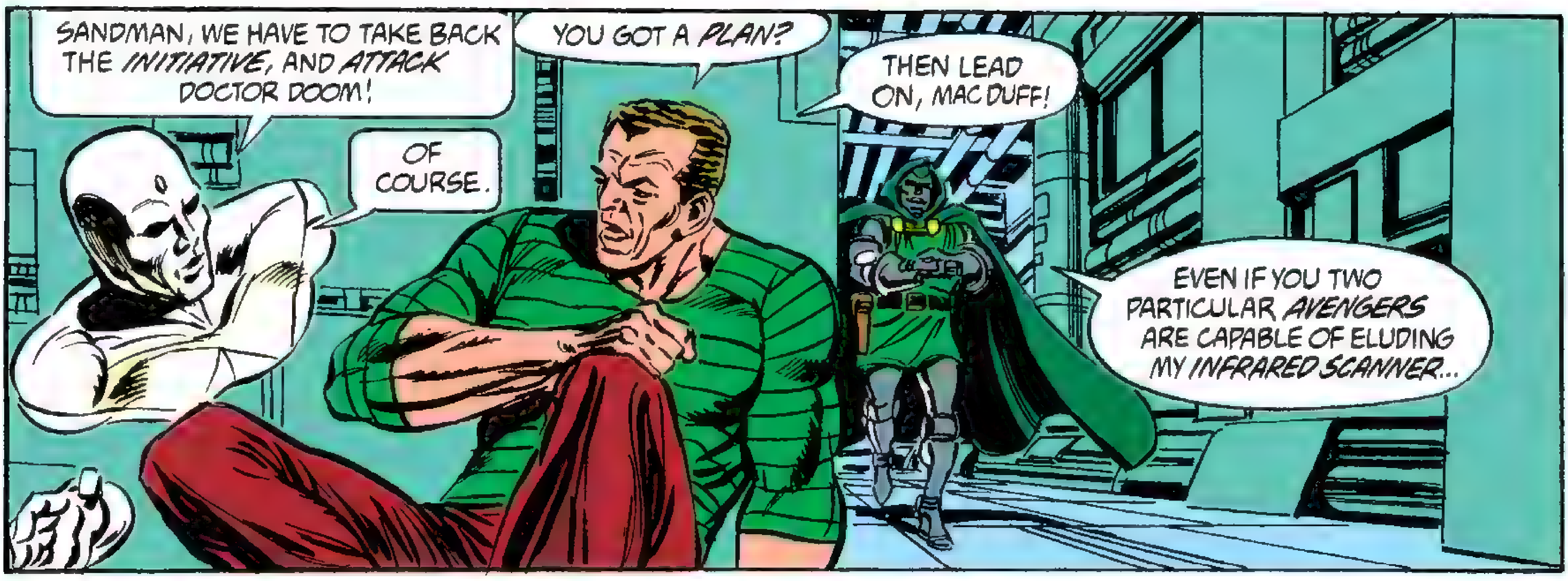

"OPPORTUNITY" IS THE WORD, BLACK WIDOW.
UNDERSTOOD. LOW PROFILE, CORRECT?
LIKE NOTHING'S THE MATTER.
IRON MAN, WE HAVE YOU DOWN AS HAVING SENT YOUR REGRETS!
HAD A LAST MINUTE CANCELLATION OR CHANGE OF PLANS, SIR?
I WAS ABLE TO RESOLVE THE SITUATION ON THE WEST COAST* SOONER THAN I EXPECTED...
...I HOPE THIS ISN'T CAUSING AN INCONVENIENCE--
* See IRON-MAN #268. -HOWARD
I WILL HAVE TO RUN THE SCANNER OVER YOU BEFORE YOU CAN ENTER.
I KNOW THAT YOU'RE WELL AWARE THAT IT'S A FORMALITY THAT NO ONE IS EXEMPT FROM!
I WOULDN'T HAVE IT ANY OTHER WAY!
ATTENTION ALL SECURITY PERSONNEL! ATTENT--
INTRUDER ALERT
SUB-SUB-BASEMENT
BWEEEE SQUEEE POP! WONK!
WHA? THE SECURITY SYSTEM JUST WENT DOWN!
THIS PARTICULAR SYSTEM CAN'T GO DOWN FOR ANY LENGTH OF TIME...
...IT WAS DESIGNED WITH TOO MANY BYPASSES AND BACK-UPS!
HERE'S THE PROBLEM...

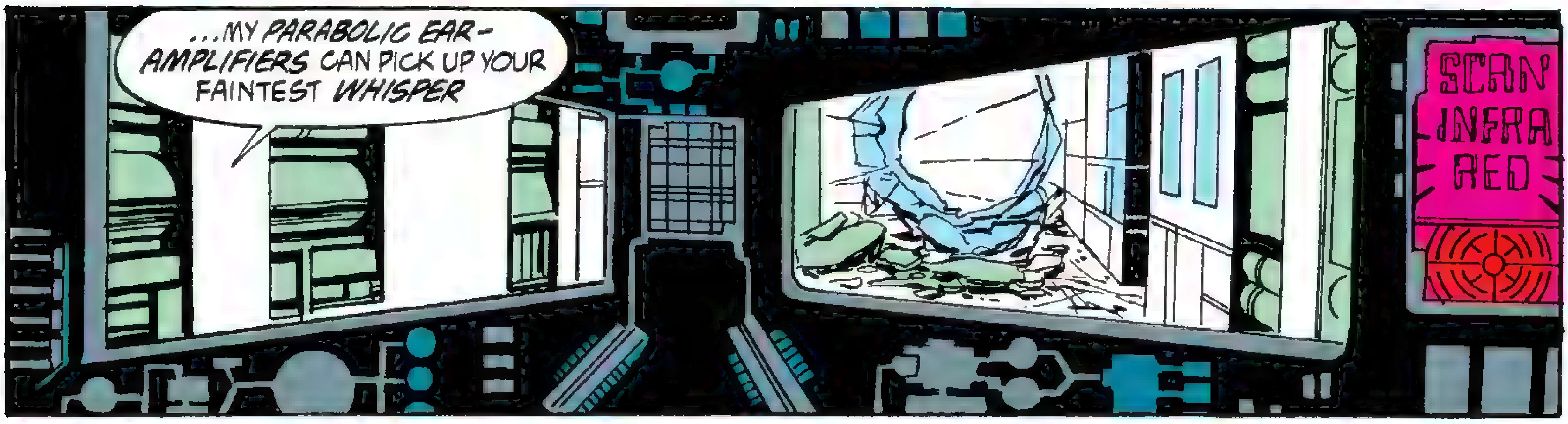

YOU'RE USING A JACK FROM YOUR OWN SUIT?
JUST RUNNING A QUICK *DIAGNOSTICS*, *SHE-HULK*.
THERE. THE BYPASS CIRCUIT IS ON LINE NOW...
-- IS PEGGY WITH A SECURITY UPDATE. CODE WORD IS STILL "OPPORTUNITY." THE SITUATION IN THE SUB-SUBBASEMENT IS NOW BEING INVESTIGATED--
SOUNDS LIKE EVERYTHING IS UNDER CONTROL!
IF IT GOES DOWN AGAIN, I'LL BE INSIDE MAKING POLITE CONVERSATION.
THANKS, *IRON MAN!* THAT WAS A QUICK SAVE!
WHAT A PLEASANT *SURPRISE!* WE THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO MISS THIS ONE!
I WOULDN'T HAVE MISSED THIS FOR THE WORLD!
LOOKS LIKE YA EVEN GOT *SIMONIZED* AND *UNDERCOATED!*
IT SEEMS SO SILLY FOR US TO KEEP PRETENDING THAT WE DON'T KNOW THAT HE'S REALLY *TONY STARK*.
HE SLIPS UP SO OFTEN! ONLY *STARK* COULD HAVE FIXED THAT GLITCH SO QUICKLY, SINCE HE WAS THE ONE WHO DESIGNED THE WHOLE SYSTEM!
AS QUIRKS GO, HIS IS NOT SO BAD!

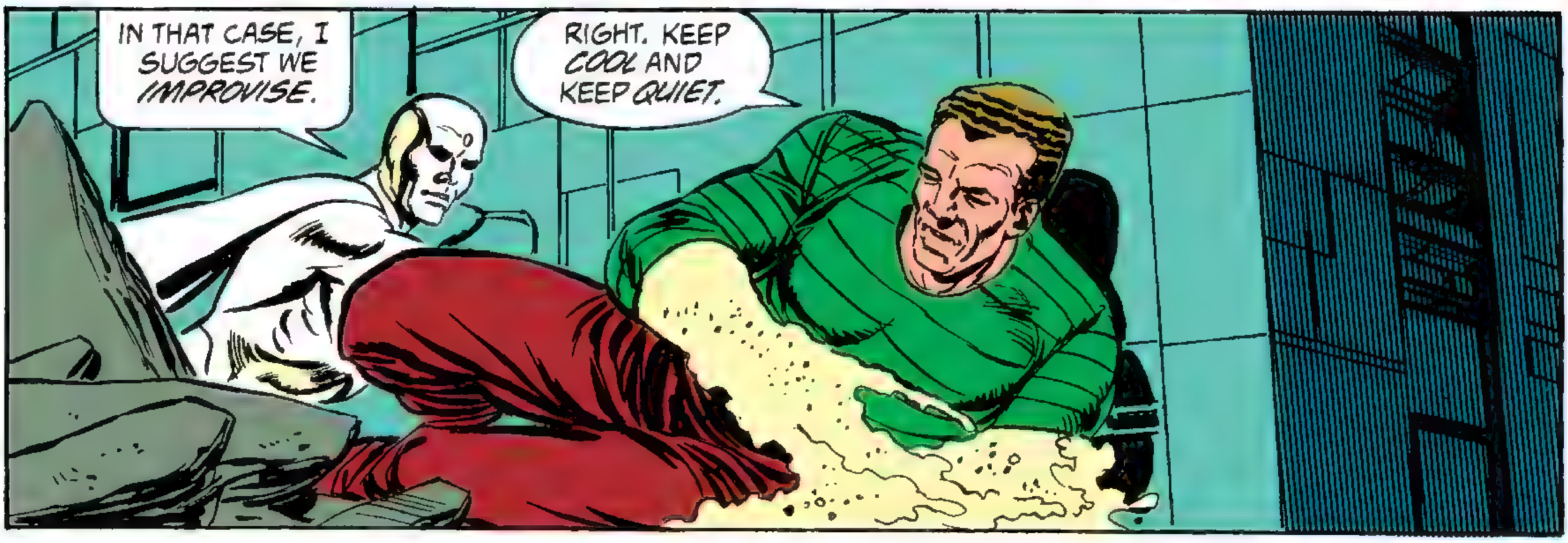

IN THE SUB-SUBBASEMENT...
YOU KNOW, I ONCE HEARD A FUNNY STORY ABOUT HOW YOU ACTUALLY PROPEL YOURSELF ALONG THROUGH THE AIR LIKE THAT...
I'M SURE YOU FOUND IT QUITE AMUSING.
YEAH! WHAT I HEARD WAS--
DOCTOR DOOM!
JARVIS WAS ON THE LEVEL!
ANXIOUS AS I AM TO HEAR THE CONCLUSION OF YOUR ANECDOTE...
...I FEAR I MUST *TERMINATE* THESE PROCEEDINGS AND MOVE ON TO MORE *PRESSING MATTERS!*
MINI-MISSILE! SANDMAN, WATCH OUT FOR--
WAY AHEAD OF YOU, *VISION!* GOT THE OL' *DONUT TRICK* WORKIN'--

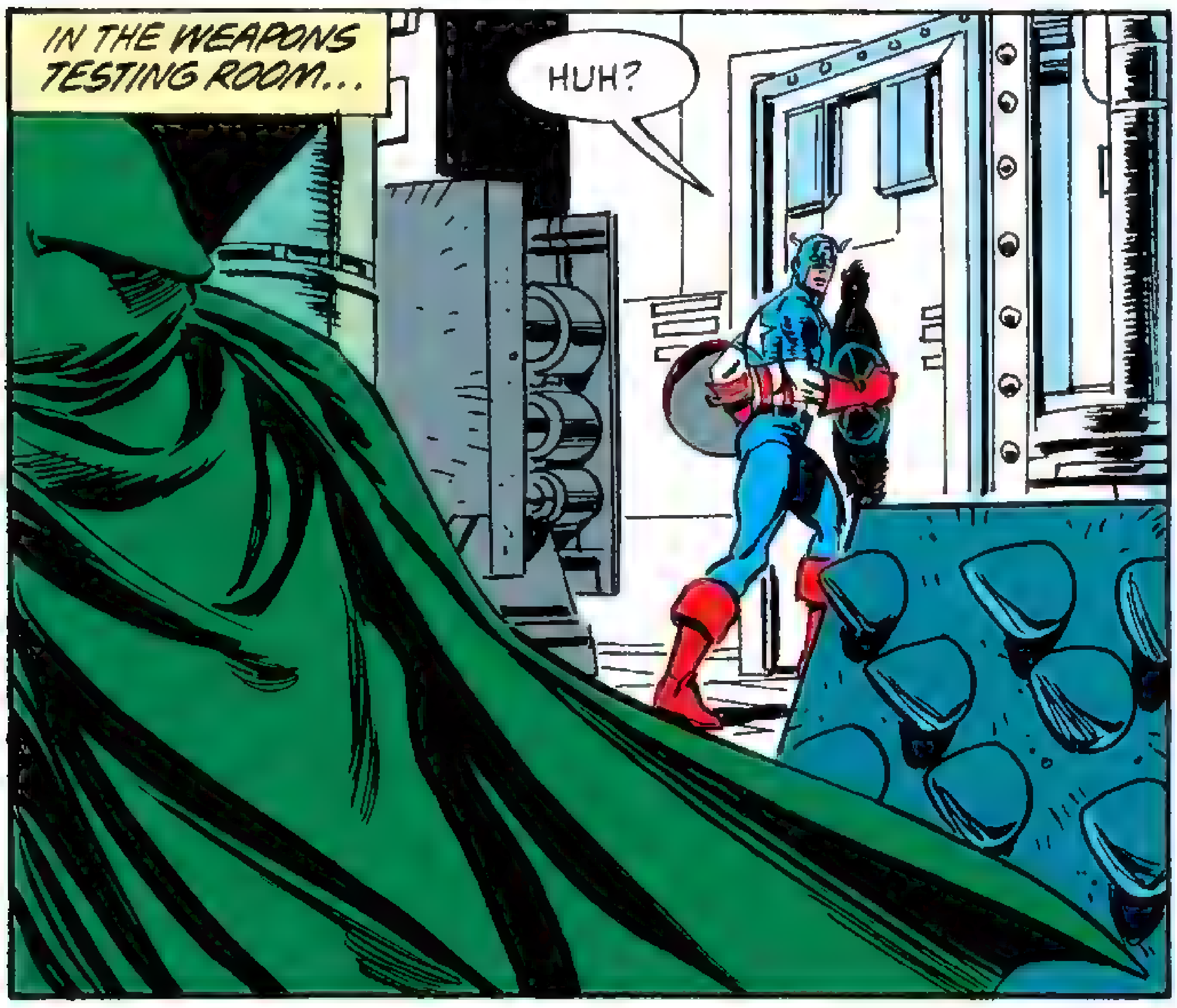

--THE BACK-BLAST!!
FA-THOOOOM
THAT'LL TEACH ME NOT TO CUT PEOPLE OFF!
DENSITY IS TOO LOW! THE PRESSURE OF THE BLAST IS HURLING ME OUT OF CONTROL...
...BUT IF I INCREASE MY MASS, MY VELOCITY WILL TURN ME INTO AN INEXORABLE PROJECTILE THAT CAN DESTROY THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE HEADQUARTERS AND WREAK HAVOC ON UNDERGROUND UTILITIES!
ALL I CAN DO IS LET THE BLAST ENERGY EXPEND ITSELF...
VISION!
WHERE ARE YOU? I WAS A BIT SCATTERED, BUT I'M GETTING MYSELF BACK TOGETHER!
OL' DOC DOOM IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER, STOMPING HIS WAY TOWARDS ME!
I HAD BETTER REPORT IN TO CAP AND FILL HIM IN ON THIS SITUATION!

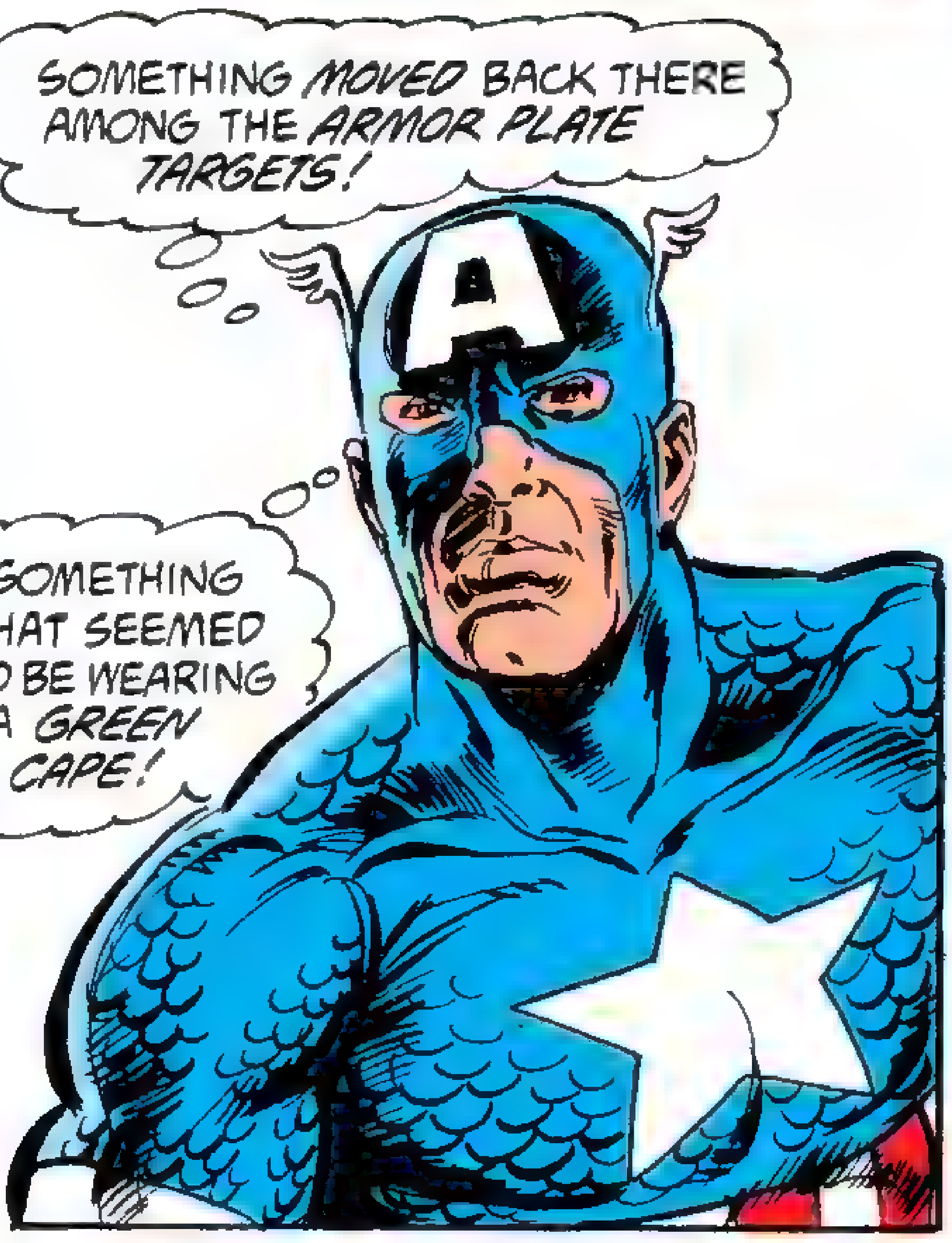

CAPTAIN AMERICA? THIS IS SANDMAN--
I SAW THE WHOLE THING, SANDMAN...
...PEGGY RELAYED THE SURVEILLANCE MONITOR VISUALS TO MY CARD SCREEN.
I HAVEN'T FINISHED CHECKING OUT THE WEAPONS-TESTING ROOM, BUT I'LL BE RIGHT OVER TO HELP YOU AND--
NO NEED FOR THAT, CAPTAIN.
I AM READY TO REASSUME MY SHARE OF THE DUTIES WITH SANDMAN.
BUT IF DOCTOR DOOM IS IN THE CORRIDOR AND NOT HERE--
THAT IS NOT PROVEN. REMEMBER HIS PROPENSITY FOR ROBOTIC DUPLICATES?
YOU'RE RIGHT, VISION! I HAD BETTER DO A COMPLETE SWEEP OF THIS ROOM!
...THE SAME SORT OF READING WE'RE GETTING FROM THE CORRIDOR!
THIS NEW HEADQUARTERS IS BUILT TO LAST! THAT BLAST IN THE CORRIDOR WAS TOTALLY DISSIPATED BY THE INTEGRAL SHOCK ABSORBERS!
STANKOWICZ
THERE WASN'T EVEN A RIPPLE IN THE PUNCH BOWL UPSTAIRS AT THE PARTY!

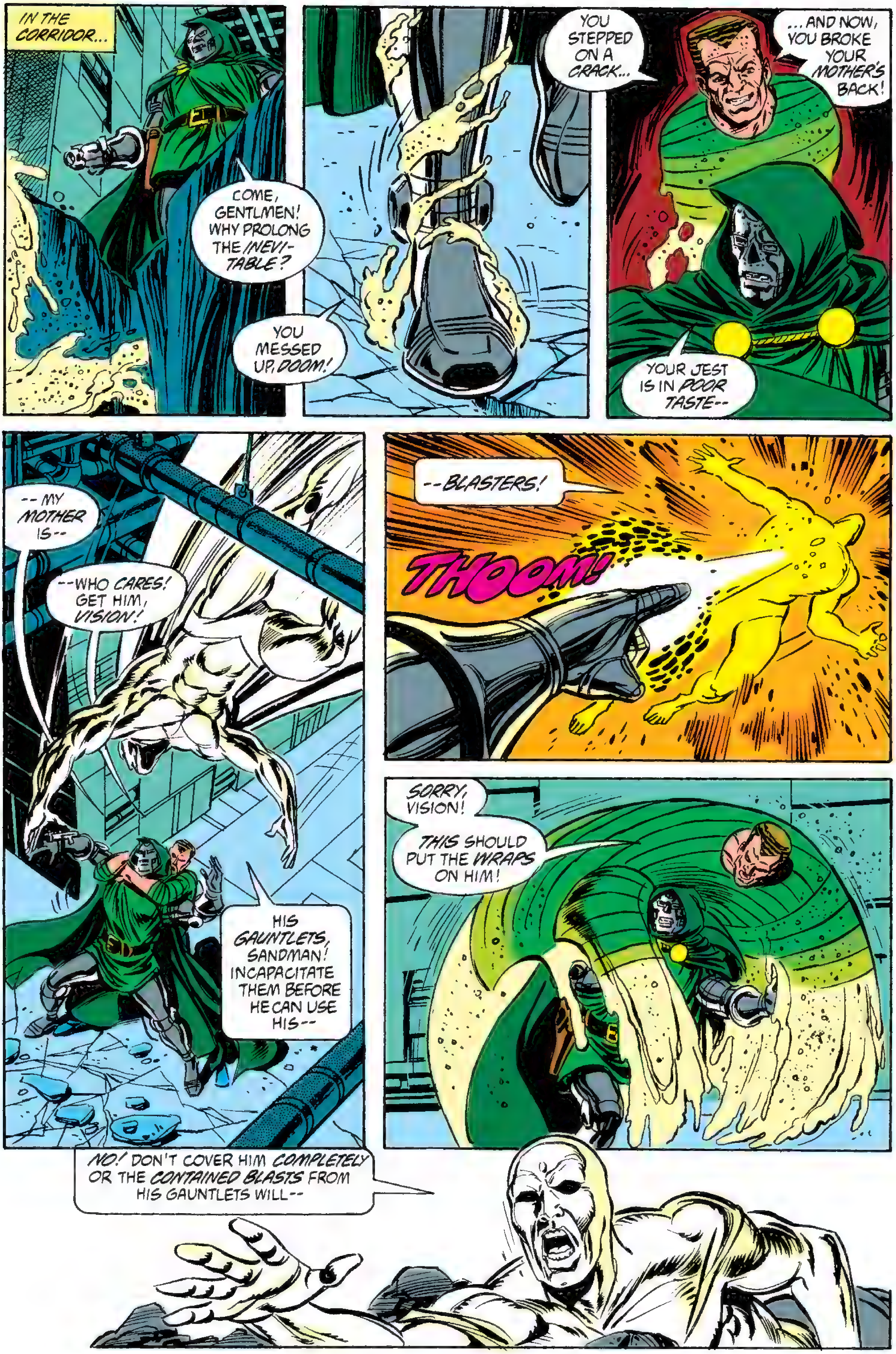

SANDMAN, WE HAVE TO TAKE BACK THE *INITIATIVE*, AND *ATTACK* DOCTOR DOOM!
YOU GOT A *PLAN?*
OF COURSE.
THEN LEAD ON, MAC DUFF!
EVEN IF YOU TWO PARTICULAR *AVENGERS* ARE CAPABLE OF ELUDING MY *INFRARED SCANNER*...

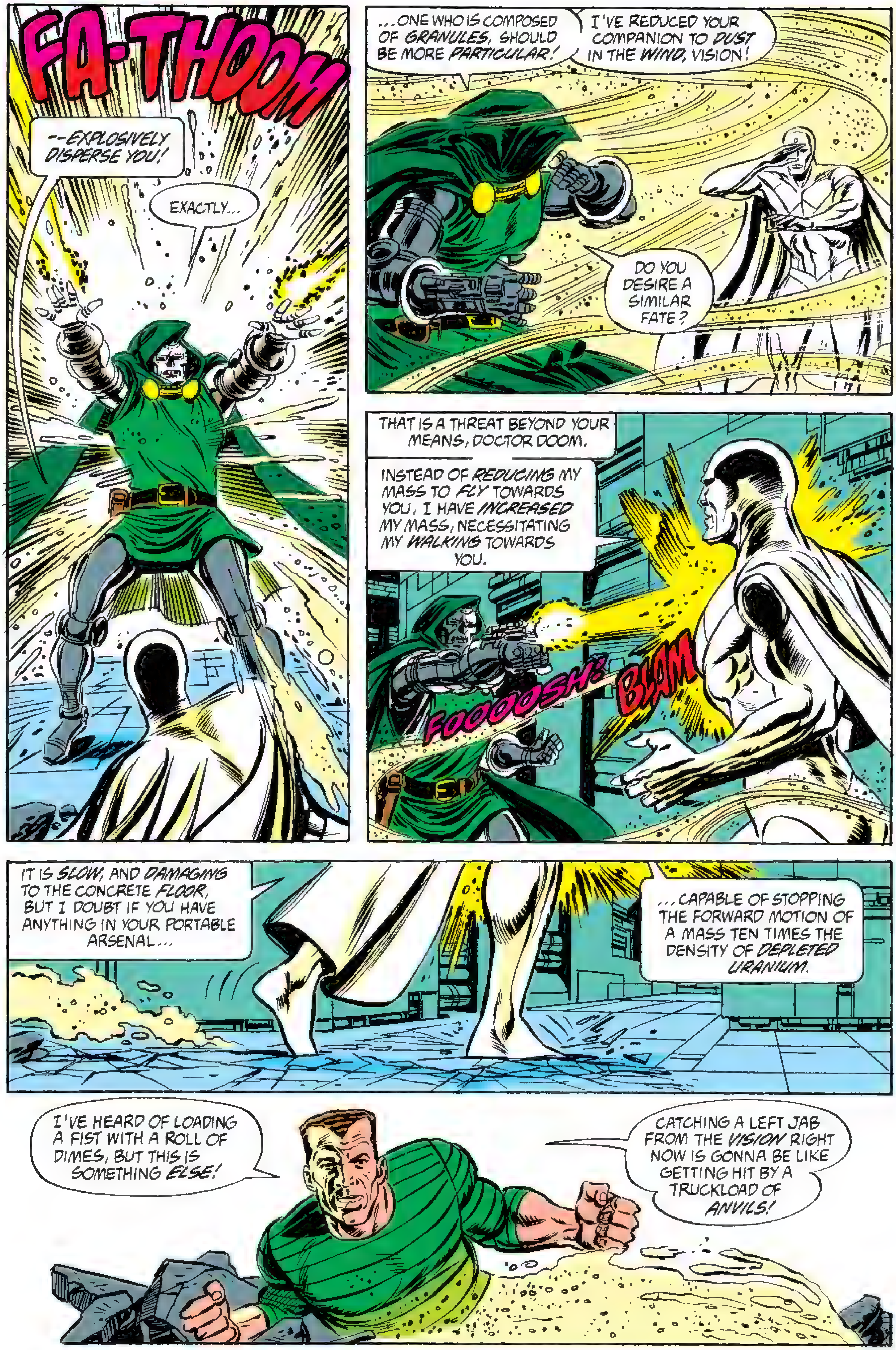

...MY *PARABOLIC EAR-AMPLIFIERS* CAN PICK UP YOUR FAINTEST *WHISPER*
SCAN INFRA RED

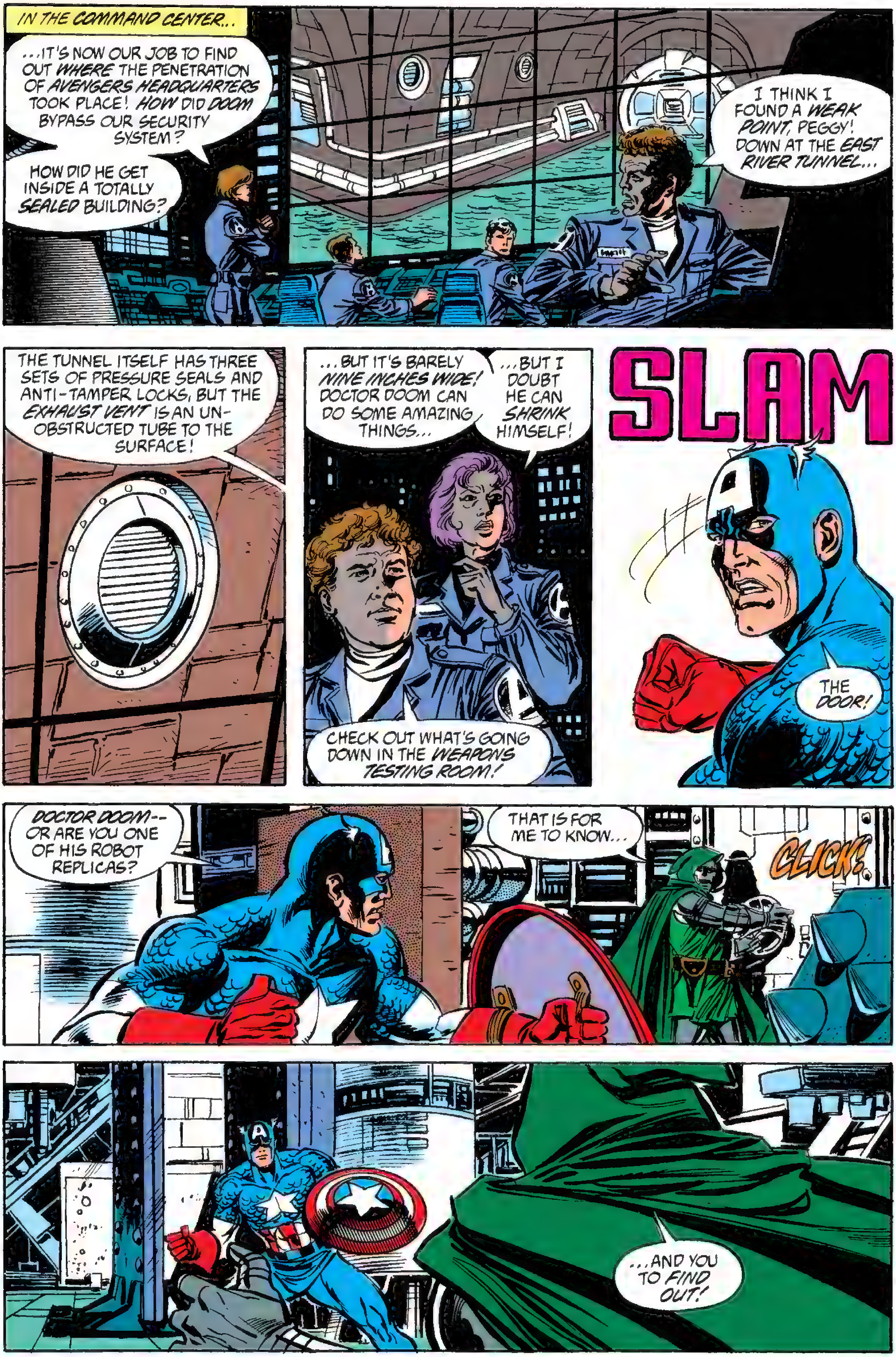

IN THAT CASE, I SUGGEST WE *IMPROVISE*.
RIGHT. KEEP *COOL* AND KEEP *QUIET*.

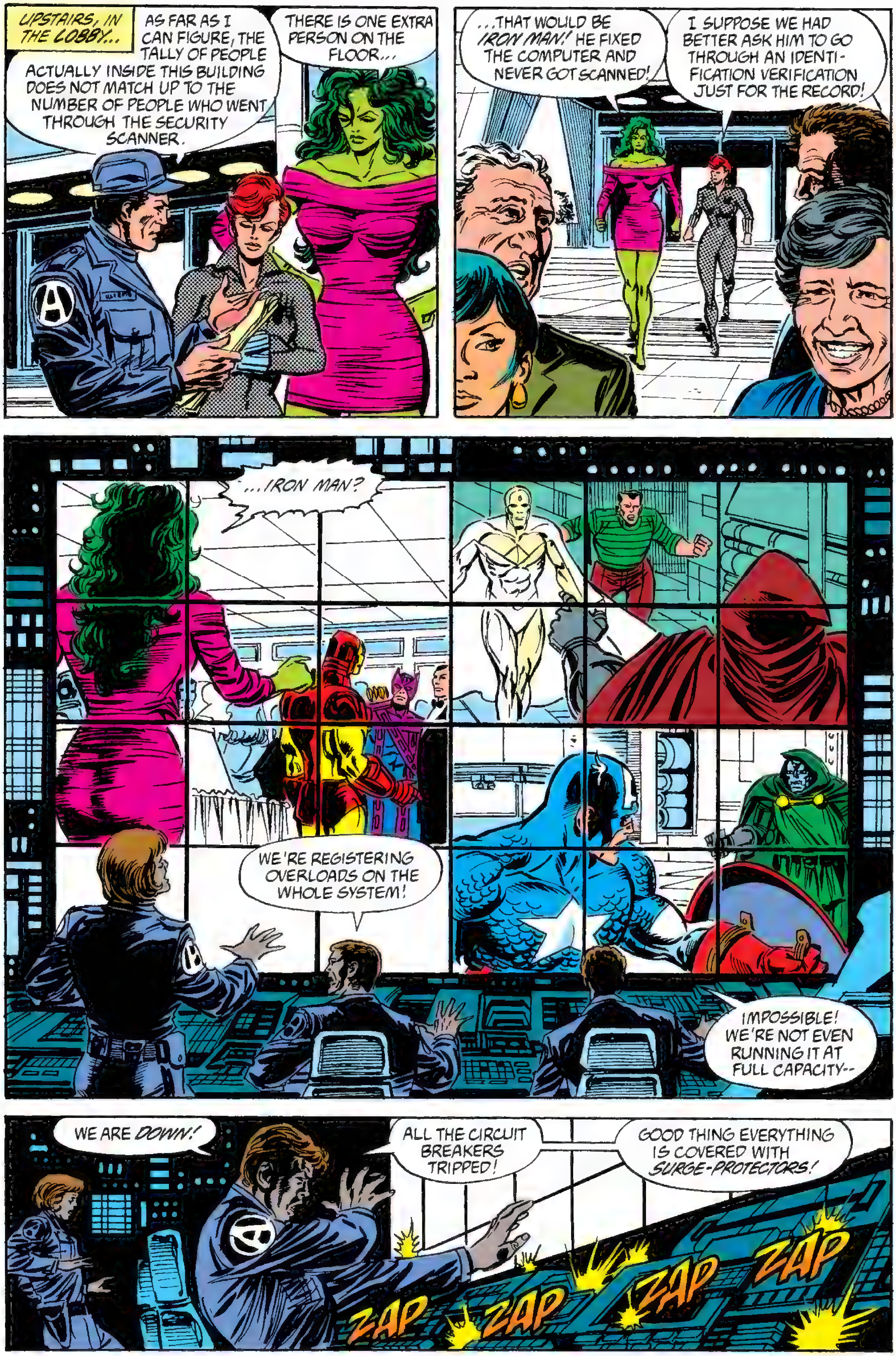

IN THE WEAPONS TESTING ROOM...
HUH?

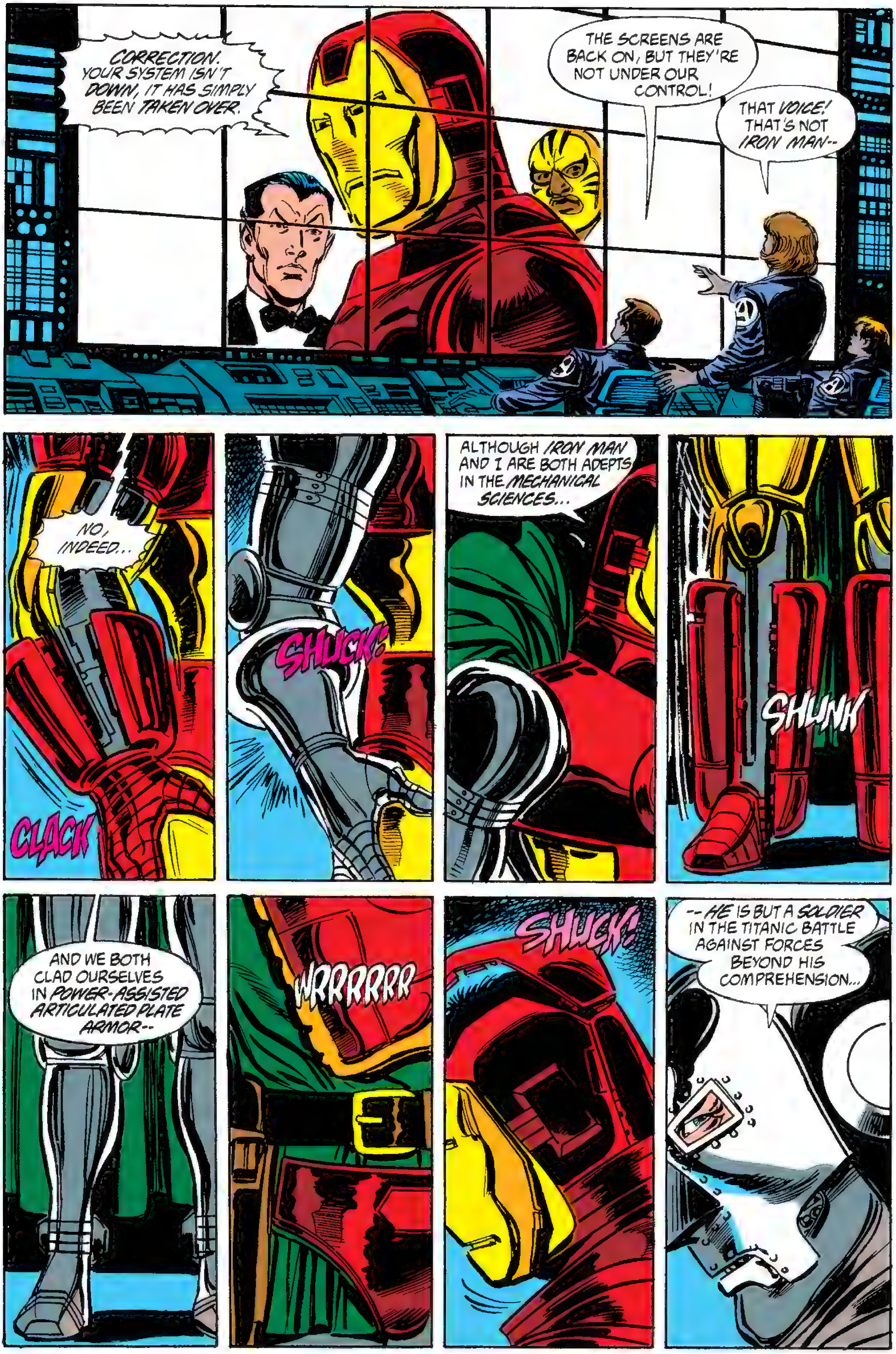

SOMETHING *MOVED* BACK THERE AMONG THE *ARMOR PLATE TARGETS!*
SOMETHING THAT SEEMED TO BE WEARING A *GREEN CAPE!*

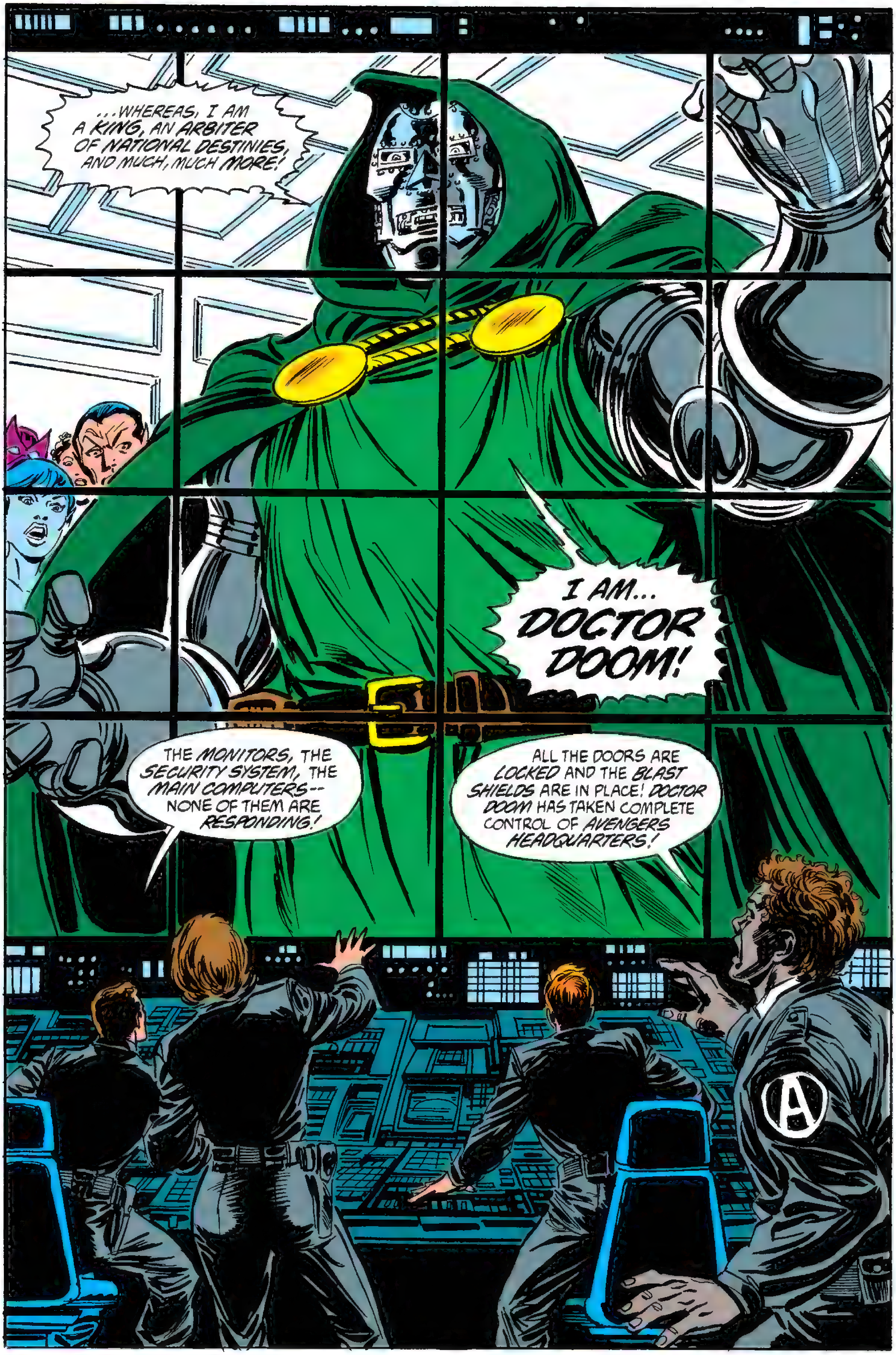

IN THE CORRIDOR...
COME, GENTLMEN! WHY PROLONG THE INEVITABLE?
YOU MESSED UP, DOOM!
YOU STEPPED ON A CRACK...
...AND NOW, YOU BROKE YOUR MOTHER'S BACK!
YOUR JEST IS IN POOR TASTE--
-- MY MOTHER IS--
--WHO CARES! GET HIM, VISION!
HIS GAUNTLETS, SANDMAN! INCAPACITATE THEM BEFORE HE CAN USE HIS--
--BLASTERS!
THOOM!
SORRY, VISION!
THIS SHOULD PUT THE WRAPS ON HIM!
NO! DON'T COVER HIM COMPLETELY OR THE CONTAINED BLASTS FROM HIS GAUNTLETS WILL--


FA-THOOM
--EXPLOSIVELY DISPERSE YOU!
EXACTLY...
...ONE WHO IS COMPOSED OF *GRANULES*, SHOULD BE MORE *PARTICULAR!*
I'VE REDUCED YOUR COMPANION TO *DUST* IN THE *WIND*, VISION!
DO YOU DESIRE A SIMILAR FATE?
THAT IS A THREAT BEYOND YOUR MEANS, DOCTOR DOOM.
INSTEAD OF *REDUCING* MY MASS TO *FLY* TOWARDS YOU, I HAVE *INCREASED* MY MASS, NECESSITATING MY *WALKING* TOWARDS YOU.
FOOOOSH!
BLAM
IT IS *SLOW*, AND *DAMAGING* TO THE CONCRETE *FLOOR*, BUT I DOUBT IF YOU HAVE ANYTHING IN YOUR PORTABLE ARSENAL...
...CAPABLE OF STOPPING THE FORWARD MOTION OF A MASS TEN TIMES THE DENSITY OF *DEPLETED URANIUM.*
I'VE HEARD OF LOADING A FIST WITH A ROLL OF DIMES, BUT THIS IS SOMETHING *ELSE!*
CATCHING A LEFT JAB FROM THE *VISION* RIGHT NOW IS GONNA BE LIKE GETTING HIT BY A TRUCKLOAD OF *ANVILS!*


IN THE COMMAND CENTER...
...IT'S NOW OUR JOB TO FIND OUT WHERE THE PENETRATION OF AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS TOOK PLACE! HOW DID DOOM BYPASS OUR SECURITY SYSTEM?
HOW DID HE GET INSIDE A TOTALLY SEALED BUILDING?
I THINK I FOUND A WEAK POINT, PEGGY! DOWN AT THE EAST RIVER TUNNEL...
THE TUNNEL ITSELF HAS THREE SETS OF PRESSURE SEALS AND ANTI-TAMPER LOCKS, BUT THE EXHAUST VENT IS AN UNOBSTRUCTED TUBE TO THE SURFACE!
...BUT IT'S BARELY NINE INCHES WIDE! DOCTOR DOOM CAN DO SOME AMAZING THINGS...
...BUT I DOUBT HE CAN SHRINK HIMSELF!
CHECK OUT WHAT'S GOING DOWN IN THE WEAPONS TESTING ROOM!
SLAM
THE DOOR!
DOCTOR DOOM-- OR ARE YOU ONE OF HIS ROBOT REPLICAS?
THAT IS FOR ME TO KNOW...
CLICK!
...AND YOU TO FIND OUT!


UPSTAIRS, IN THE LOBBY...
AS FAR AS I CAN FIGURE, THE TALLY OF PEOPLE ACTUALLY INSIDE THIS BUILDING DOES NOT MATCH UP TO THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO WENT THROUGH THE SECURITY SCANNER.
THERE IS ONE EXTRA PERSON ON THE FLOOR...
...THAT WOULD BE *IRON MAN!* HE FIXED THE COMPUTER AND NEVER GOT SCANNED!
I SUPPOSE WE HAD BETTER ASK HIM TO GO THROUGH AN IDENTIFICATION VERIFICATION JUST FOR THE RECORD!
...IRON MAN?
WE'RE REGISTERING OVERLOADS ON THE WHOLE SYSTEM!
IMPOSSIBLE! WE'RE NOT EVEN RUNNING IT AT FULL CAPACITY--
WE ARE *DOWN!*
ALL THE CIRCUIT BREAKERS TRIPPED!
GOOD THING EVERYTHING IS COVERED WITH *SURGE-PROTECTORS!*
ZAP ZAP ZAP ZAP


CORRECTION. YOUR SYSTEM ISN'T DOWN, IT HAS SIMPLY BEEN TAKEN OVER.
THE SCREENS ARE BACK ON, BUT THEY'RE NOT UNDER OUR CONTROL!
THAT VOICE! THAT'S NOT IRON MAN--
NO, INDEED...
CLACK
SHUCK!
ALTHOUGH IRON MAN AND I ARE BOTH ADEPTS IN THE MECHANICAL SCIENCES...
SHUNK
AND WE BOTH CLAD OURSELVES IN POWER-ASSISTED ARTICULATED PLATE ARMOR--
WRRRRRR
SHUCK!
--HE IS BUT A SOLDIER IN THE TITANIC BATTLE AGAINST FORCES BEYOND HIS COMPREHENSION...


...WHEREAS, I AM A KING, AN ARBITER OF NATIONAL DESTINIES, AND MUCH, MUCH MORE!
I AM... DOCTOR DOOM!
THE MONITORS, THE SECURITY SYSTEM, THE MAIN COMPUTERS-- NONE OF THEM ARE RESPONDING!
ALL THE DOORS ARE LOCKED AND THE BLAST SHIELDS ARE IN PLACE! DOCTOR DOOM HAS TAKEN COMPLETE CONTROL OF AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS!

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FOLD
TITLE • AVENGERS
NO. 330
MONTH
SCHEDULE
ARTIST

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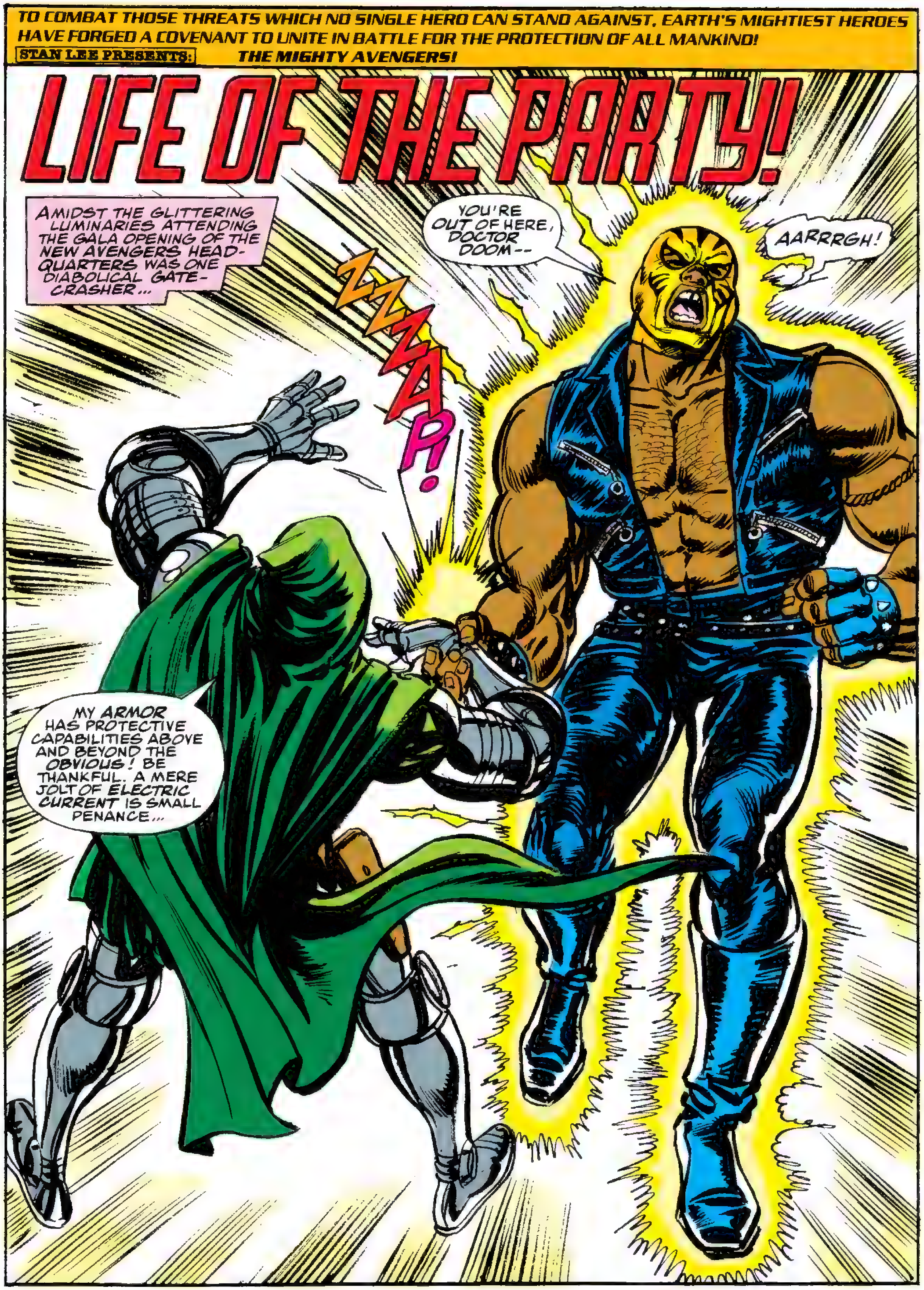
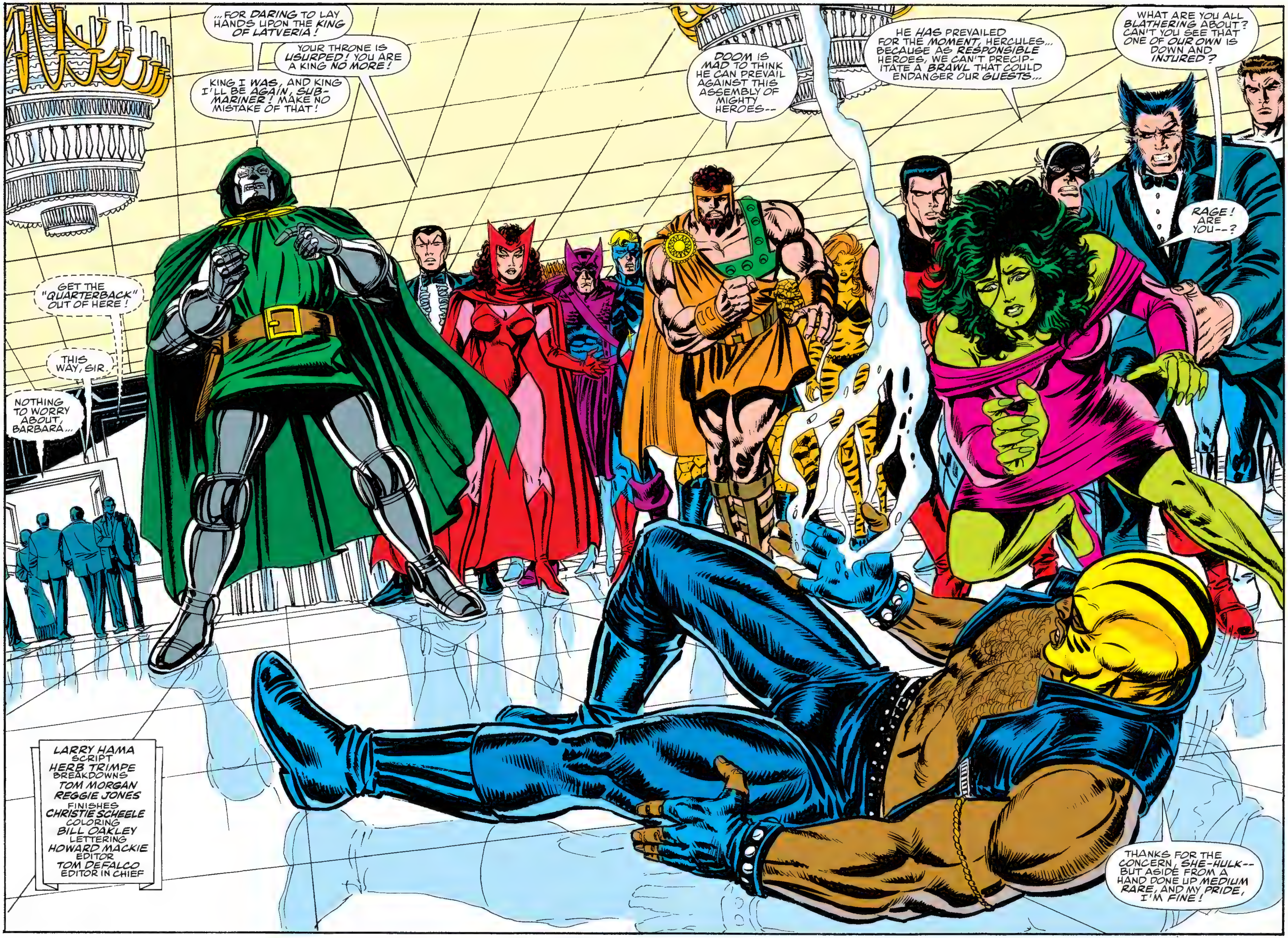
AVENGERS®
ONE TOUCH-- AND DOCTOR DOOM™ BLOWS SKY HIGH!
NOBODY TOLD THAT TO RAGE™
MORGAN 3-30-91


TO COMBAT THOSE THREATS WHICH NO SINGLE HERO CAN STAND AGAINST, EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES HAVE FORGED A COVENANT TO UNITE IN BATTLE FOR THE PROTECTION OF ALL MANKIND!
STAN LEE PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!
LIFE OF THE PARTY!
AMIDST THE GLITTERING LUMINARIES ATTENDING THE GALA OPENING OF THE NEW AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS WAS ONE DIABOLICAL GATE-CRASHER...
YOU'RE OUT OF HERE, DOCTOR DOOM--
AARRRGH!
ZZZAP!
MY ARMOR HAS PROTECTIVE CAPABILITIES ABOVE AND BEYOND THE OBVIOUS! BE THANKFUL. A MERE JOLT OF ELECTRIC CURRENT IS SMALL PENANCE...


...FOR *DARING* TO LAY HANDS UPON THE *KING OF LATVERIA*!
YOUR THRONE IS *USURPED*! YOU ARE A KING *NO MORE*!
KING I *WAS*, AND KING I'LL BE *AGAIN*, SUB-MARINER! MAKE NO MISTAKE OF THAT!
GET THE "QUARTERBACK" OUT OF HERE!
THIS WAY, SIR.
NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, BARBARA...
DOOM IS *MAD* TO THINK HE CAN PREVAIL AGAINST THIS ASSEMBLY OF MIGHTY HEROES--
HE *HAS* PREVAILED FOR THE *MOMENT*, HERCULES... BECAUSE AS *RESPONSIBLE* HEROES, WE CAN'T PRECIPITATE A *BRAWL* THAT COULD ENDANGER OUR *GUESTS*...
WHAT ARE YOU ALL *BLATHERING* ABOUT? CAN'T YOU SEE THAT ONE OF *OUR OWN* IS DOWN AND *INJURED*?
RAGE! ARE YOU--?
THANKS FOR THE CONCERN, *SHE-HULK*-- BUT ASIDE FROM A HAND DONE UP *MEDIUM RARE*, AND MY *PRIDE*, I'M *FINE*!

LARRY HAMA
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HERB TRIMPE
BREAKDOWNS
TOM MORGAN
REGGIE JONES
FINISHES
CHRISTIE SCHEELE
COLORING
BILL OAKLEY
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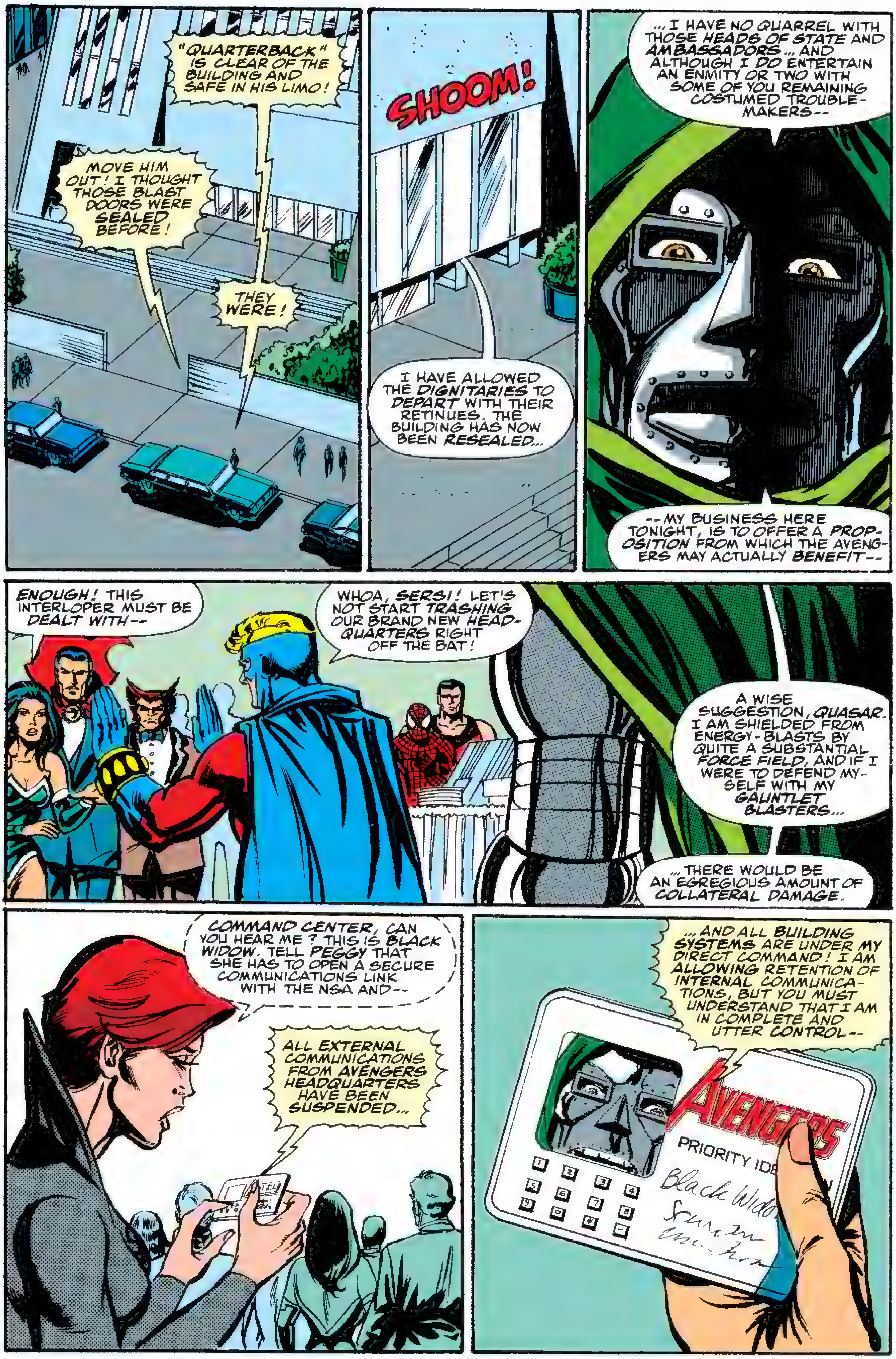
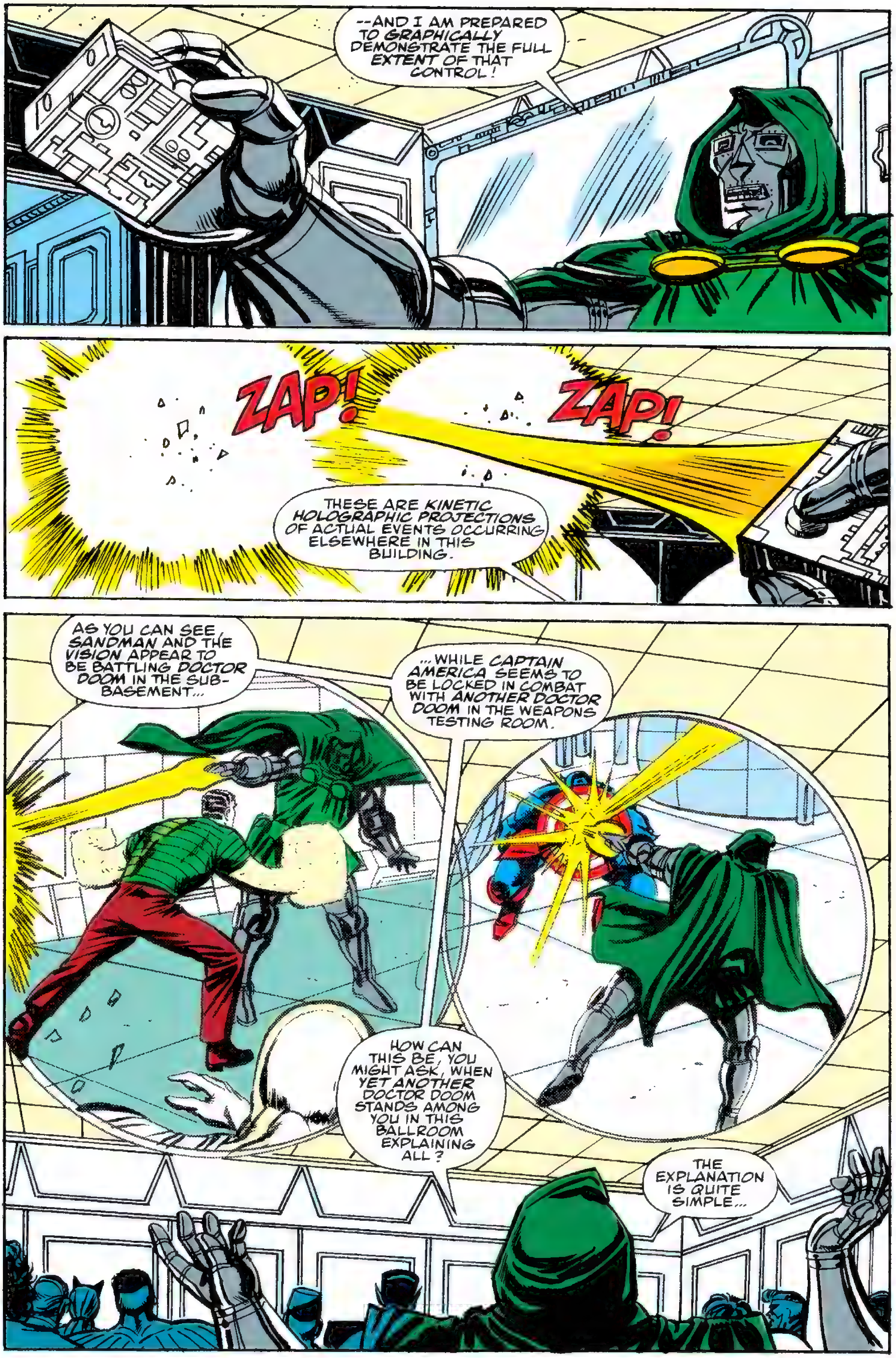
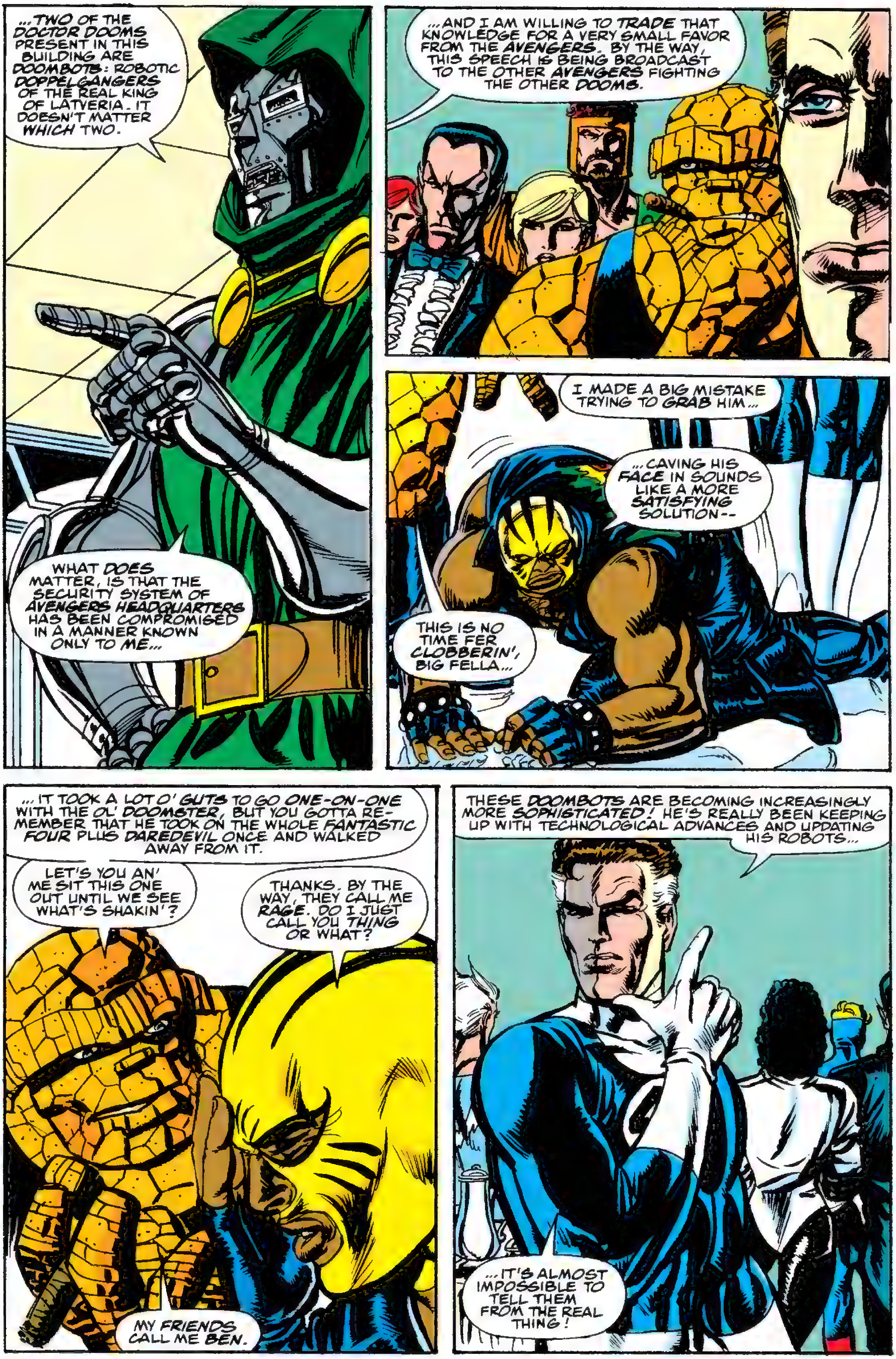
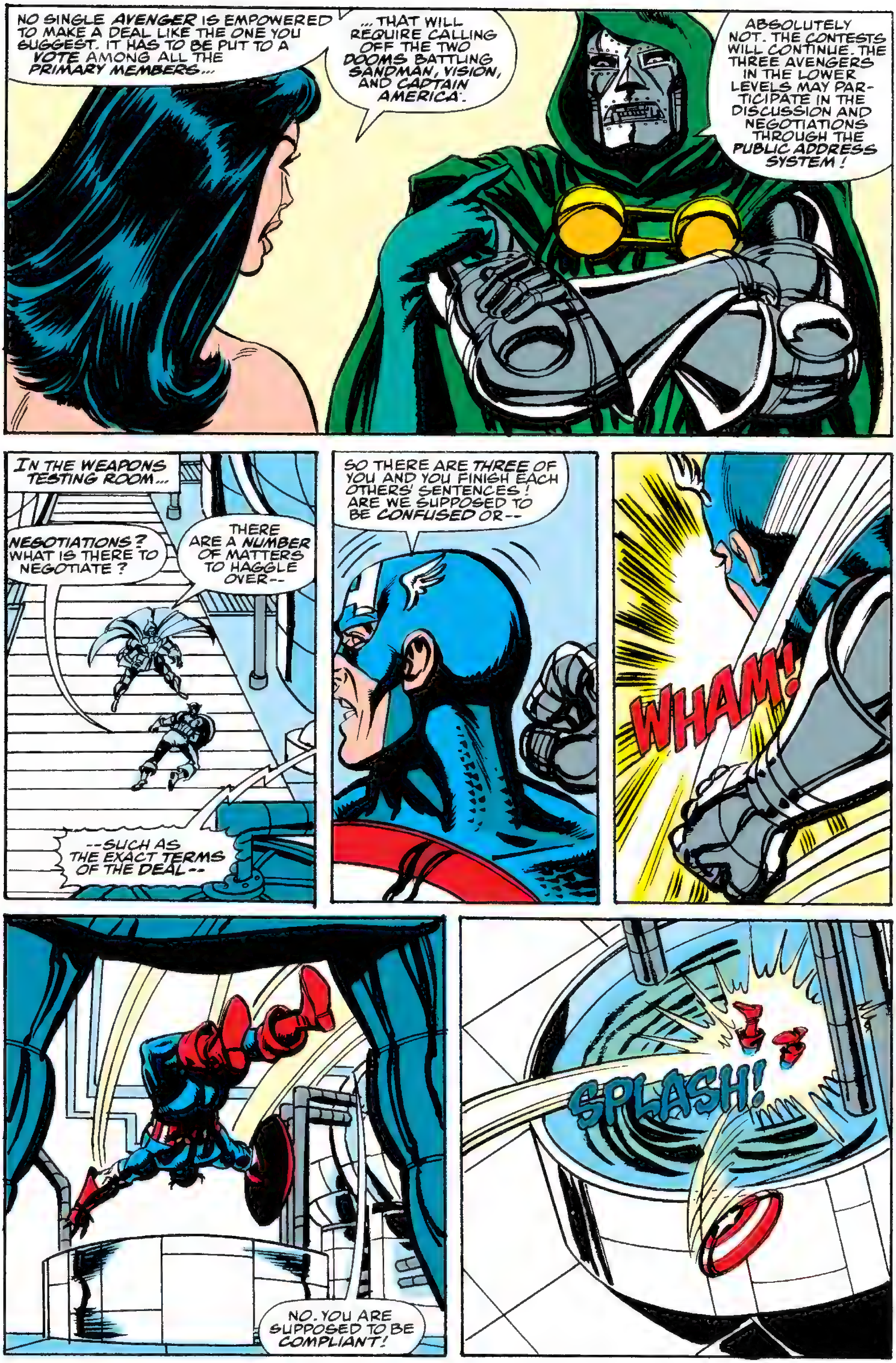
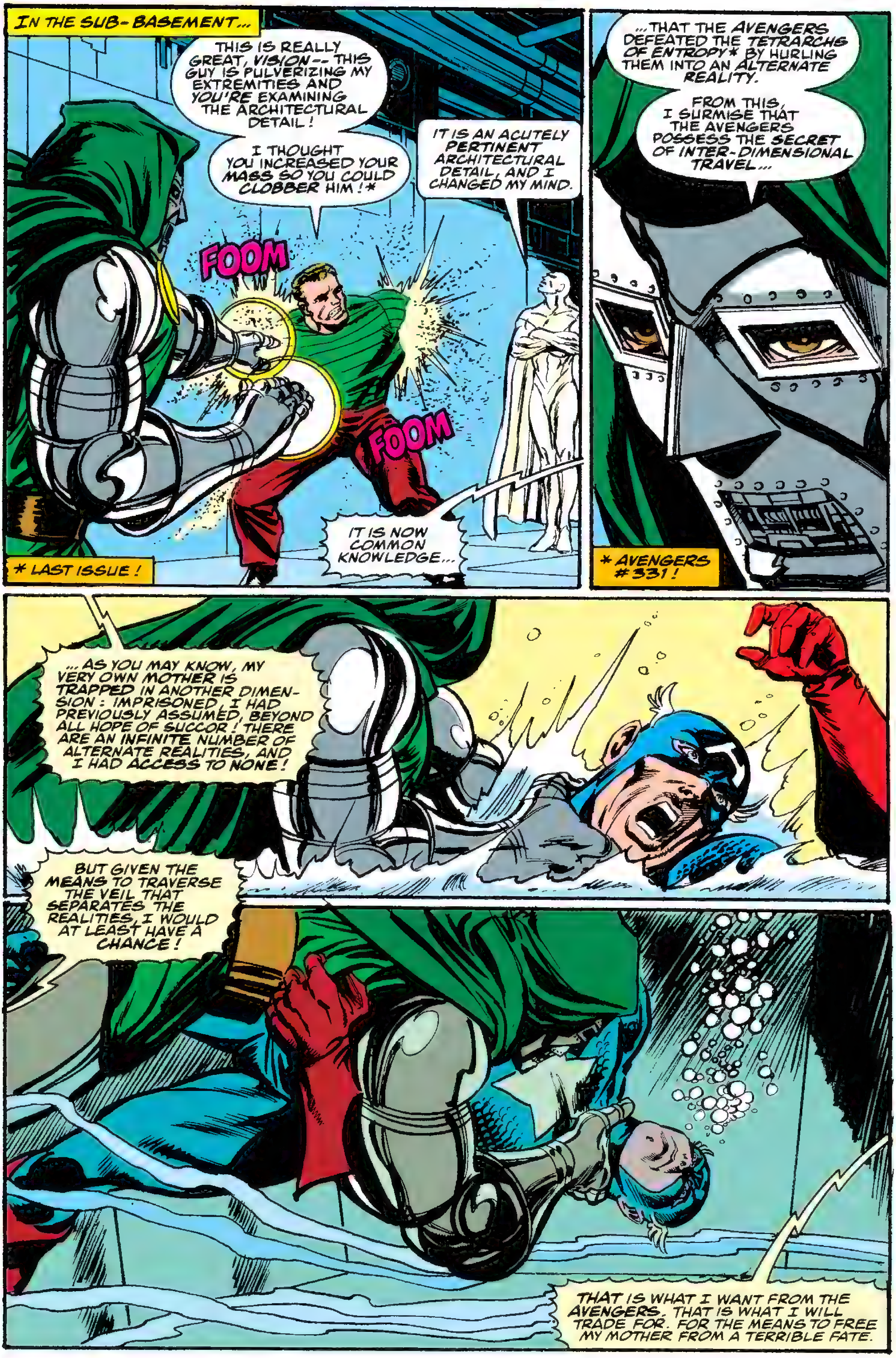
TOM DEFALCO
EDITOR IN CHIEF

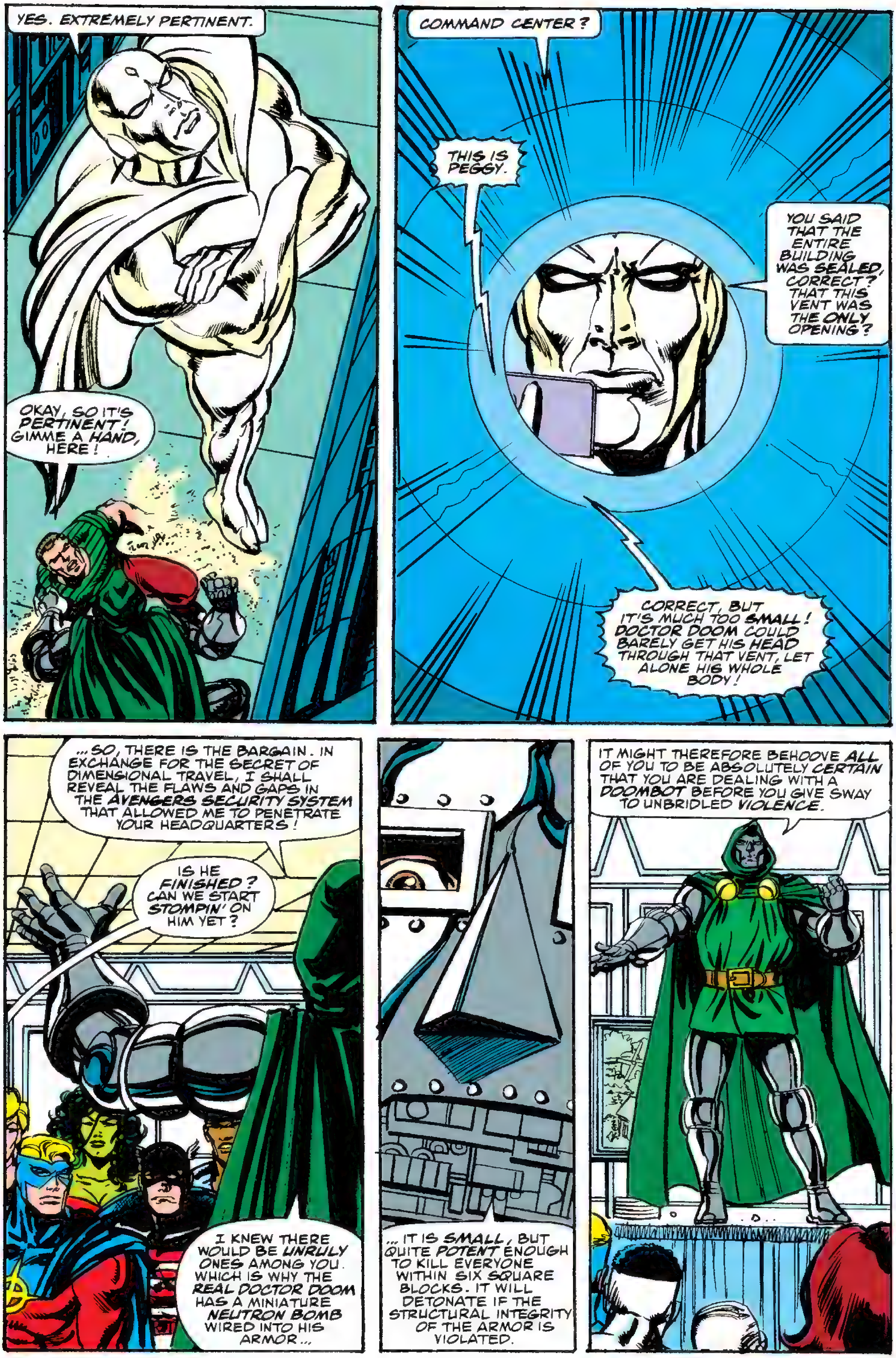

"QUARTERBACK" IS CLEAR OF THE BUILDING AND SAFE IN HIS LIMO!
MOVE HIM OUT! I THOUGHT THOSE BLAST DOORS WERE SEALED BEFORE!
THEY WERE!
SHOOM!
I HAVE ALLOWED THE DIGNITARIES TO DEPART WITH THEIR RETINUES. THE BUILDING HAS NOW BEEN RESEALED...
...I HAVE NO QUARREL WITH THOSE HEADS OF STATE AND AMBASSADORS... AND ALTHOUGH I DO ENTERTAIN AN ENMITY OR TWO WITH SOME OF YOU REMAINING COSTUMED TROUBLE-MAKERS--
--MY BUSINESS HERE TONIGHT, IS TO OFFER A PROPOSITION FROM WHICH THE AVENGERS MAY ACTUALLY BENEFIT--
ENOUGH! THIS INTERLOPER MUST BE DEALT WITH--
WHOA, SERSI! LET'S NOT START TRASHING OUR BRAND NEW HEADQUARTERS RIGHT OFF THE BAT!
A WISE SUGGESTION, QUASAR. I AM SHIELDED FROM ENERGY-BLASTS BY QUITE A SUBSTANTIAL FORCE FIELD, AND IF I WERE TO DEFEND MYSELF WITH MY GAUNTLET BLASTERS...
...THERE WOULD BE AN EGREGIOUS AMOUNT OF COLLATERAL DAMAGE.
COMMAND CENTER, CAN YOU HEAR ME? THIS IS BLACK WIDOW. TELL PEGGY THAT SHE HAS TO OPEN A SECURE COMMUNICATIONS LINK WITH THE NSA AND--
ALL EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS HAVE BEEN SUSPENDED...
...AND ALL BUILDING SYSTEMS ARE UNDER MY DIRECT COMMAND! I AM ALLOWING RETENTION OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS, BUT YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THAT I AM IN COMPLETE AND UTTER CONTROL--
AVENGERS
PRIORITY IDE
Black Wido

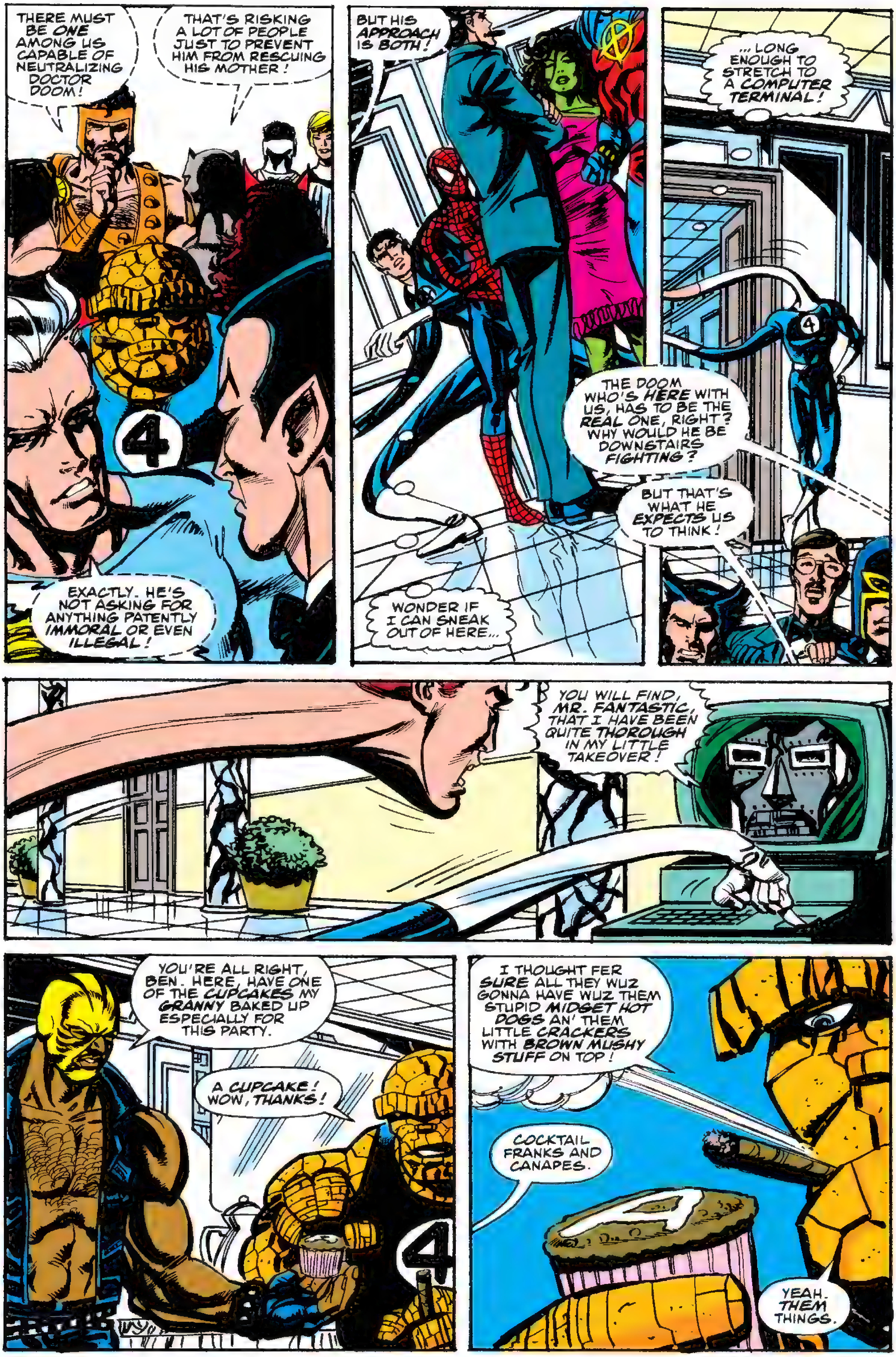

--AND I AM PREPARED TO GRAPHICALLY DEMONSTRATE THE FULL EXTENT OF THAT CONTROL!
ZAP!
ZAP!
THESE ARE KINETIC HOLOGRAPHIC PROJECTIONS OF ACTUAL EVENTS OCCURRING ELSEWHERE IN THIS BUILDING.
AS YOU CAN SEE, SANDMAN AND THE VISION APPEAR TO BE BATTLING DOCTOR DOOM IN THE SUB-BASEMENT...
...WHILE CAPTAIN AMERICA SEEMS TO BE LOCKED IN COMBAT WITH ANOTHER DOCTOR DOOM IN THE WEAPONS TESTING ROOM.
HOW CAN THIS BE, YOU MIGHT ASK, WHEN YET ANOTHER DOCTOR DOOM STANDS AMONG YOU IN THIS BALLROOM EXPLAINING ALL?
THE EXPLANATION IS QUITE SIMPLE...

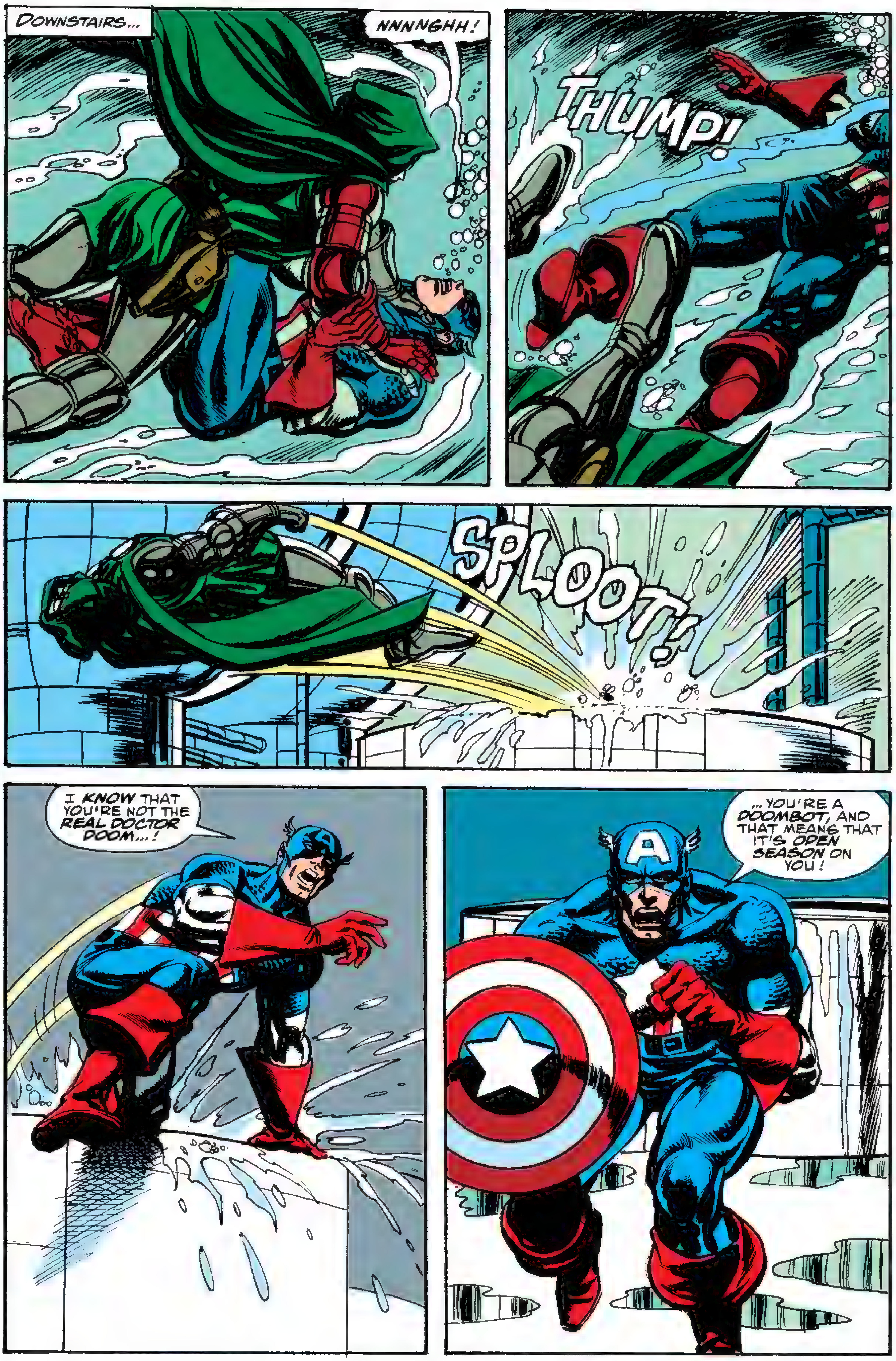

...TWO OF THE DOCTOR DOOMS PRESENT IN THIS BUILDING ARE DOOMBOTS: ROBOTIC DOPPELGANGERS OF THE REAL KING OF LATVERIA. IT DOESN'T MATTER WHICH TWO.
WHAT DOES MATTER, IS THAT THE SECURITY SYSTEM OF AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS HAS BEEN COMPROMISED IN A MANNER KNOWN ONLY TO ME...
...AND I AM WILLING TO TRADE THAT KNOWLEDGE FOR A VERY SMALL FAVOR FROM THE AVENGERS. BY THE WAY, THIS SPEECH IS BEING BROADCAST TO THE OTHER AVENGERS FIGHTING THE OTHER DOOMS.
I MADE A BIG MISTAKE TRYING TO GRAB HIM...
...CAVING HIS FACE IN SOUNDS LIKE A MORE SATISFYING SOLUTION--
THIS IS NO TIME FER CLOBBERIN', BIG FELLA...
...IT TOOK A LOT O' GUTS TO GO ONE-ON-ONE WITH THE OL' DOOMSTER, BUT YOU GOTTA REMEMBER THAT HE TOOK ON THE WHOLE FANTASTIC FOUR PLUS DAREDEVIL ONCE AND WALKED AWAY FROM IT.
LET'S YOU AN' ME SIT THIS ONE OUT UNTIL WE SEE WHAT'S SHAKIN'?
THANKS. BY THE WAY, THEY CALL ME RAGE. DO I JUST CALL YOU THING OR WHAT?
MY FRIENDS CALL ME BEN.
THESE DOOMBOTS ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY MORE SOPHISTICATED! HE'S REALLY BEEN KEEPING UP WITH TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES AND UPDATING HIS ROBOTS...
...IT'S ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO TELL THEM FROM THE REAL THING!


NO SINGLE AVENGER IS EMPOWERED TO MAKE A DEAL LIKE THE ONE YOU SUGGEST. IT HAS TO BE PUT TO A VOTE AMONG ALL THE PRIMARY MEMBERS...
...THAT WILL REQUIRE CALLING OFF THE TWO DOOMS BATTLING SANDMAN, VISION, AND CAPTAIN AMERICA.
ABSOLUTELY NOT. THE CONTESTS WILL CONTINUE. THE THREE AVENGERS IN THE LOWER LEVELS MAY PARTICIPATE IN THE DISCUSSION AND NEGOTIATIONS THROUGH THE PUBLIC ADDRESS SYSTEM!
IN THE WEAPONS TESTING ROOM...
NEGOTIATIONS? WHAT IS THERE TO NEGOTIATE?
THERE ARE A NUMBER OF MATTERS TO HAGGLE OVER--
--SUCH AS THE EXACT TERMS OF THE DEAL--
SO THERE ARE THREE OF YOU AND YOU FINISH EACH OTHERS' SENTENCES! ARE WE SUPPOSED TO BE CONFUSED OR--
WHAM!
NO. YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO BE COMPLIANT!
SPLASH!

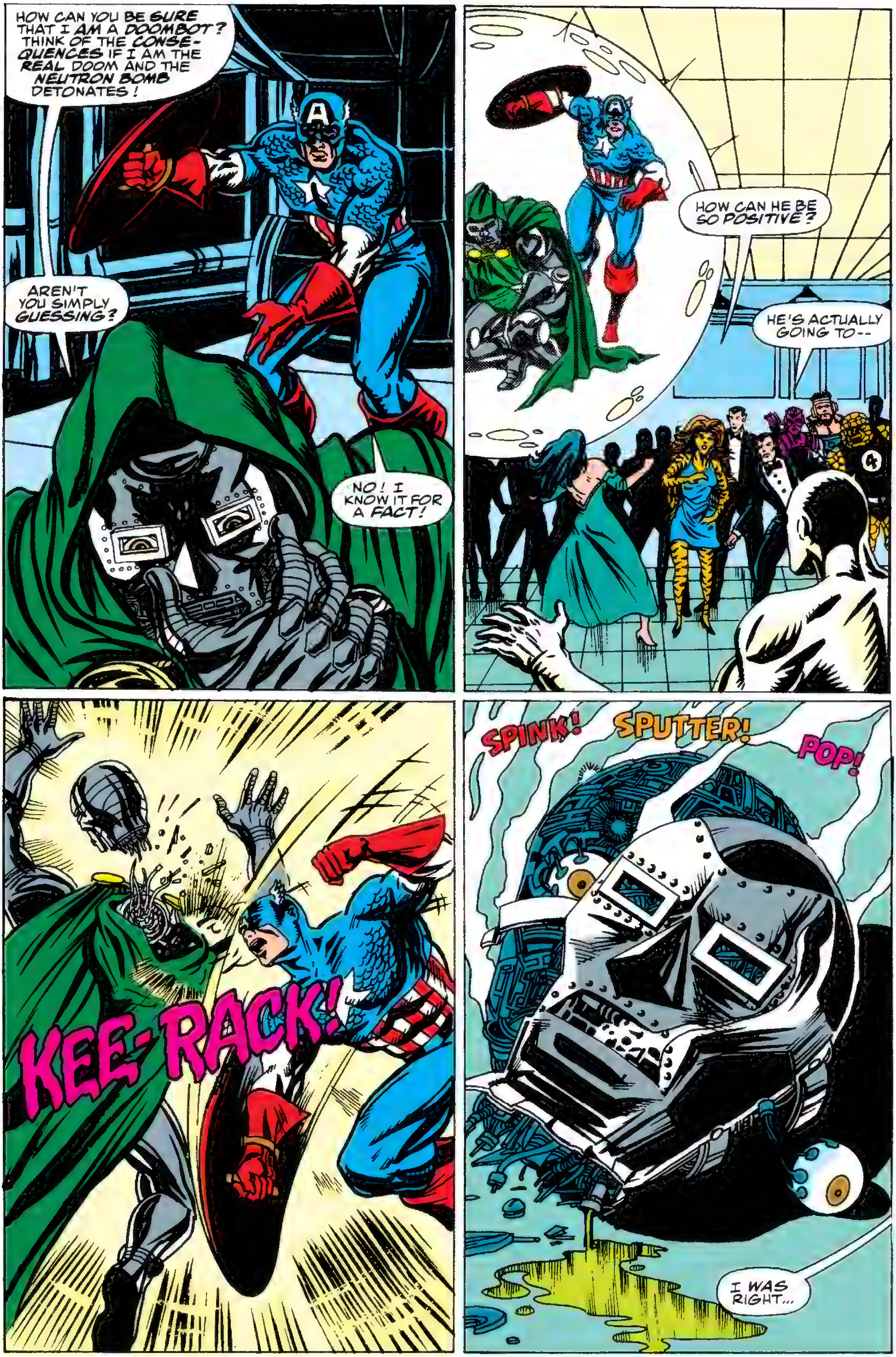

IN THE SUB-BASEMENT...
THIS IS REALLY GREAT, VISION-- THIS GUY IS PULVERIZING MY EXTREMITIES AND YOU'RE EXAMINING THE ARCHITECTURAL DETAIL!
I THOUGHT YOU INCREASED YOUR MASS SO YOU COULD CLOBBER HIM!*
IT IS AN ACUTELY PERTINENT ARCHITECTURAL DETAIL, AND I CHANGED MY MIND.
FOOM
FOOM
IT IS NOW COMMON KNOWLEDGE...
* LAST ISSUE!
...THAT THE AVENGERS DEFEATED THE TETRARCHS OF ENTROPY* BY HURLING THEM INTO AN ALTERNATE REALITY.
FROM THIS, I SURMISE THAT THE AVENGERS POSSESS THE SECRET OF INTER-DIMENSIONAL TRAVEL...
* AVENGERS #331!
...AS YOU MAY KNOW, MY VERY OWN MOTHER IS TRAPPED IN ANOTHER DIMENSION: IMPRISONED, I HAD PREVIOUSLY ASSUMED, BEYOND ALL HOPE OF SUCCOR! THERE ARE AN INFINITE NUMBER OF ALTERNATE REALITIES, AND I HAD ACCESS TO NONE!
BUT GIVEN THE MEANS TO TRAVERSE THE VEIL THAT SEPARATES THE REALITIES, I WOULD AT LEAST HAVE A CHANCE!
THAT IS WHAT I WANT FROM THE AVENGERS. THAT IS WHAT I WILL TRADE FOR. FOR THE MEANS TO FREE MY MOTHER FROM A TERRIBLE FATE.


YES. EXTREMELY PERTINENT.
OKAY, SO IT'S *PERTINENT!* GIMME A *HAND*, HERE!
COMMAND CENTER?
THIS IS PEGGY.
YOU SAID THAT THE ENTIRE BUILDING WAS *SEALED*, CORRECT? THAT THIS VENT WAS *THE ONLY* OPENING?
CORRECT, BUT IT'S MUCH TOO *SMALL!* *DOCTOR DOOM* COULD BARELY GET HIS *HEAD* THROUGH THAT VENT, LET ALONE HIS WHOLE BODY!
...SO, THERE IS THE BARGAIN. IN EXCHANGE FOR THE SECRET OF DIMENSIONAL TRAVEL, I SHALL REVEAL THE FLAWS AND GAPS IN THE *AVENGERS SECURITY SYSTEM* THAT ALLOWED ME TO PENETRATE YOUR HEADQUARTERS!
IS HE *FINISHED?* CAN WE START *STOMPIN'* ON HIM YET?
I KNEW THERE WOULD BE *UNRULY* ONES AMONG YOU. WHICH IS WHY THE *REAL DOCTOR DOOM* HAS A MINIATURE *NEUTRON BOMB* WIRED INTO HIS ARMOR...
...IT IS *SMALL*, BUT QUITE *POTENT* ENOUGH TO KILL EVERYONE WITHIN SIX SQUARE BLOCKS. IT WILL DETONATE IF THE STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY OF THE ARMOR IS VIOLATED.
IT MIGHT THEREFORE BEHOOVE *ALL* OF YOU TO BE ABSOLUTELY *CERTAIN* THAT YOU ARE DEALING WITH A *DOOMBOT* BEFORE YOU GIVE SWAY TO UNBRIDLED *VIOLENCE*.

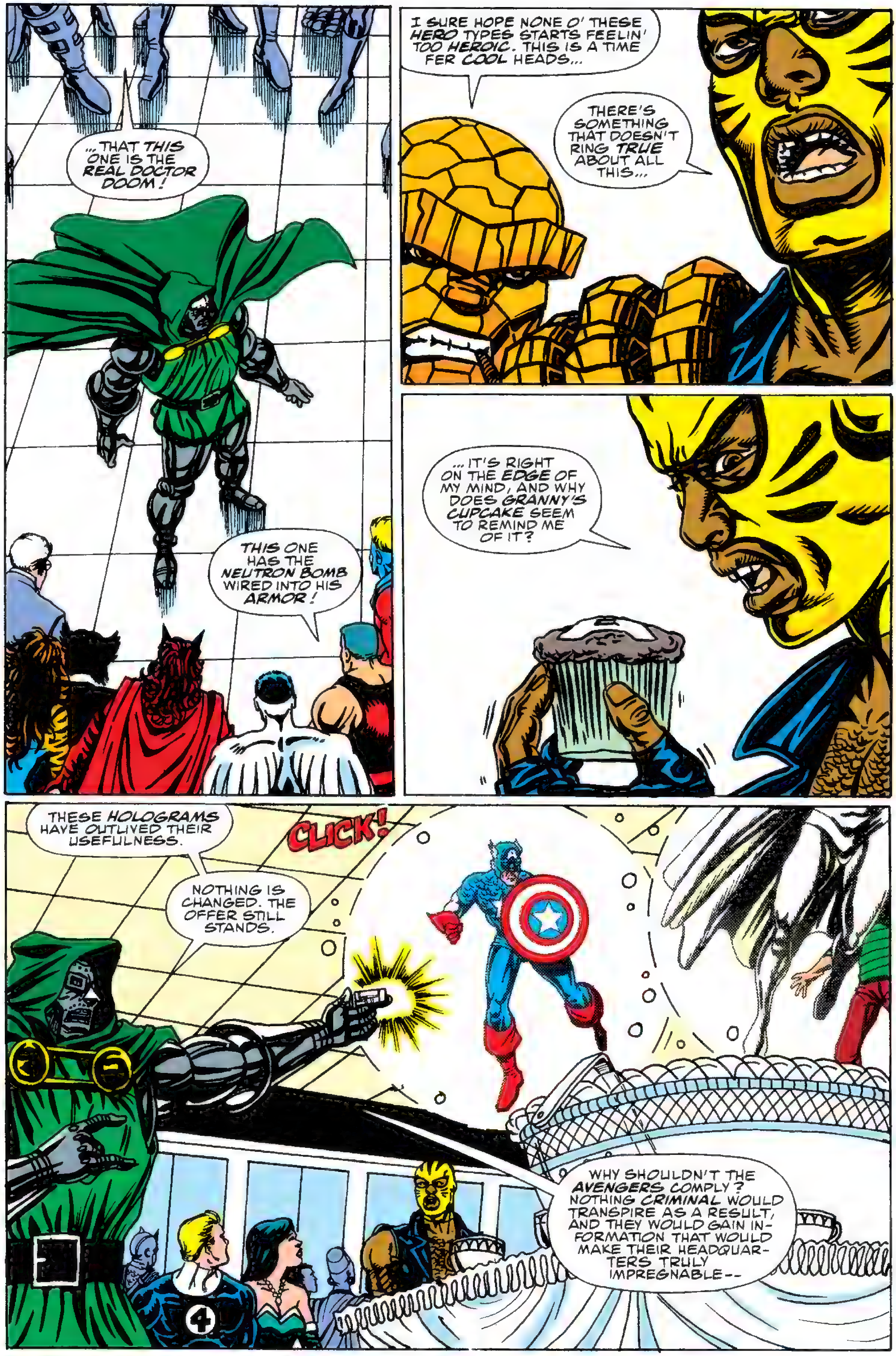

THERE MUST BE ONE AMONG US CAPABLE OF NEUTRALIZING DOCTOR DOOM!
THAT'S RISKING A LOT OF PEOPLE JUST TO PREVENT HIM FROM RESCUING HIS MOTHER!
EXACTLY. HE'S NOT ASKING FOR ANYTHING PATENTLY IMMORAL OR EVEN ILLEGAL!
BUT HIS APPROACH IS BOTH!
WONDER IF I CAN SNEAK OUT OF HERE...
...LONG ENOUGH TO STRETCH TO A COMPUTER TERMINAL!
THE DOOM WHO'S HERE WITH US, HAS TO BE THE REAL ONE, RIGHT? WHY WOULD HE BE DOWNSTAIRS FIGHTING?
BUT THAT'S WHAT HE EXPECTS US TO THINK!
YOU WILL FIND, MR. FANTASTIC, THAT I HAVE BEEN QUITE THOROUGH IN MY LITTLE TAKEOVER!
YOU'RE ALL RIGHT, BEN. HERE, HAVE ONE OF THE CUPCAKES MY GRANNY BAKED UP ESPECIALLY FOR THIS PARTY.
A CUPCAKE! WOW, THANKS!
I THOUGHT FER SURE ALL THEY WUZ GONNA HAVE WUZ THEM STUPID MIDGET HOT DOGS AN' THEM LITTLE CRACKERS WITH BROWN MUSHY STUFF ON TOP!
COCKTAIL FRANKS AND CANAPES.
YEAH. THEM THINGS.

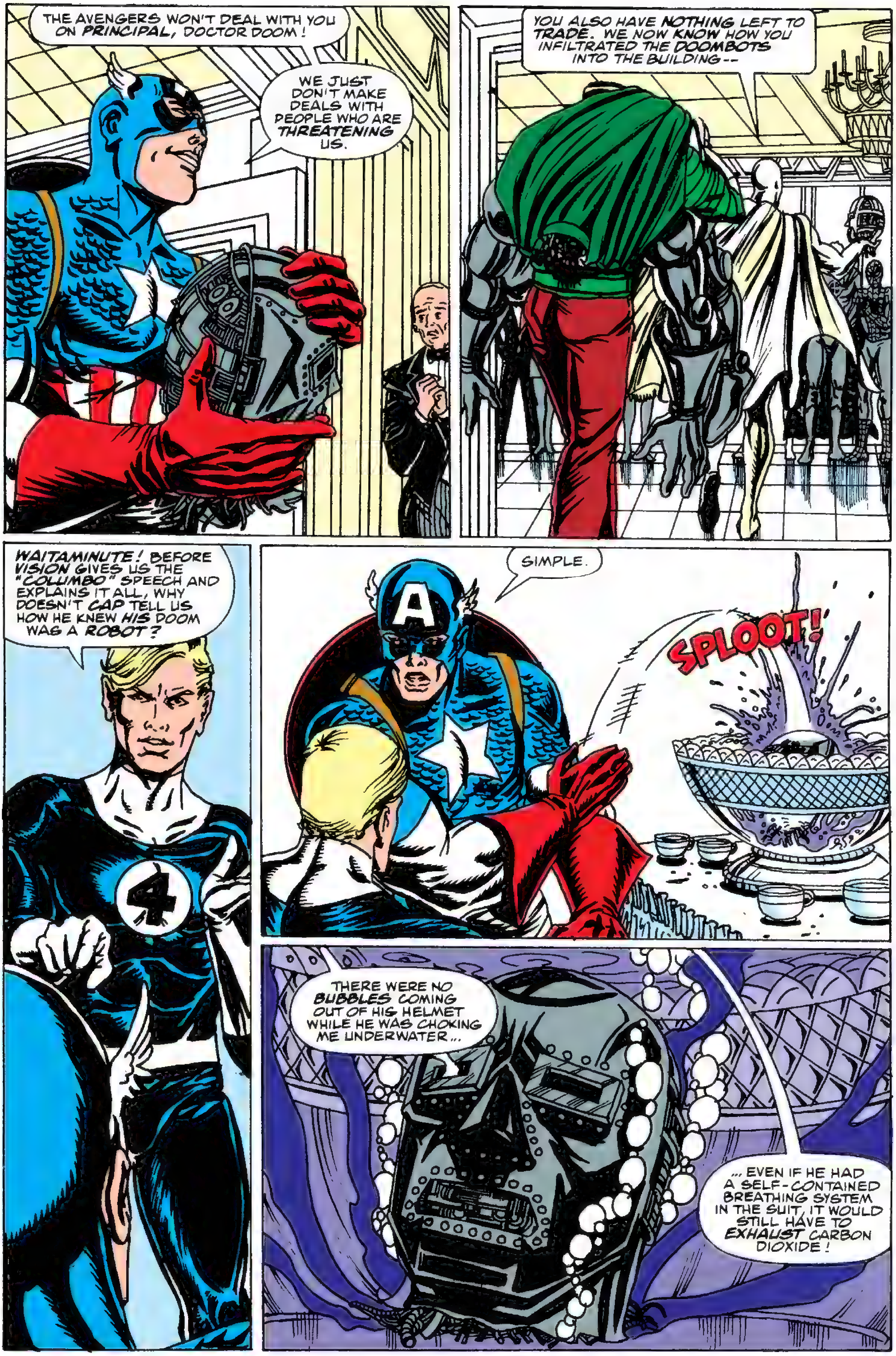

DOWNSTAIRS...
NNNNGHH!
THUMP!
SPLOOT!
I KNOW THAT YOU'RE NOT THE REAL DOCTOR DOOM...!
...YOU'RE A DOOMBOT, AND THAT MEANS THAT IT'S OPEN SEASON ON YOU!

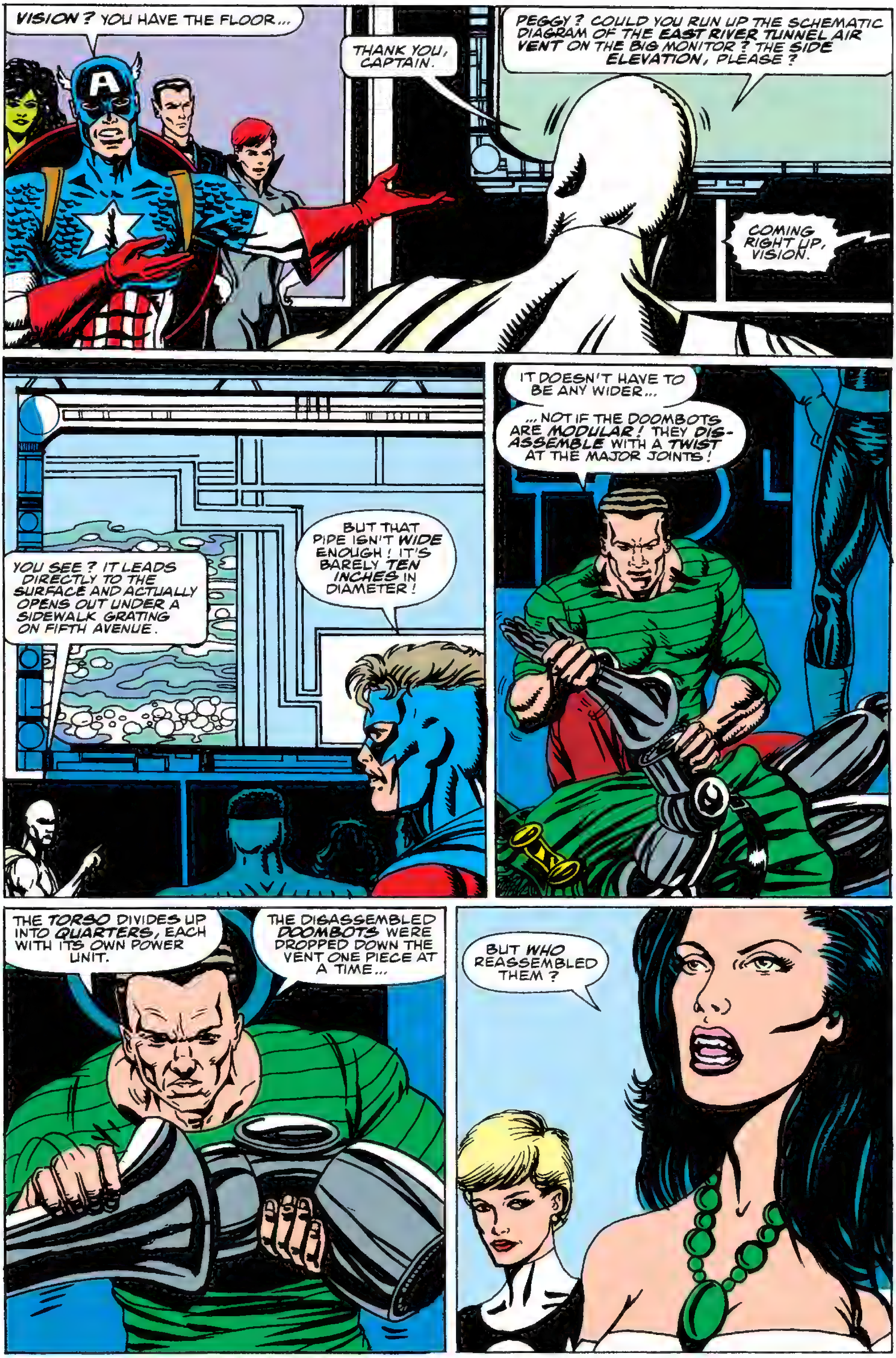
EVERYTHING IS QUITE CLEAR, SANDMAN. YOU MAY BRING THIS ENCOUNTER TO A CONCLUSION.
I HOPE YOU GOT A REAL GOOD PLAN WORKED OUT, VISION...
FTHAM
...'CAUSE MY TACTIC OF WEARIN' DOWN HIS FISTS WITH MY FACE ISN'T WORKING OUT SO HOT!
THAT IS BECAUSE YOU HAVEN'T BEEN PARTICULAR ENOUGH ABOUT YOUR ATTACK PLAN. YOU'VE BEEN GOING AGAINST THE GRAIN. YOU SHOULD GO WITH THE FLOW AND GET INSIDE THE PROBLEM.
I GET IT! INSINUATION IS BETTER THAN THE DIRECT APPROACH!
WHEN I GET THROUGH WITH YOU, DOCTOR DOOM, YOU'RE GONNA FEEL LIKE YOU SPENT THE DAY AT THE BEACH...
...AND GOT SAND INTO EVERY NOOK AND CRANNY!
MY ARMOR IS FILLING UP WITH SAND...!
...I CAN'T MOVE!!

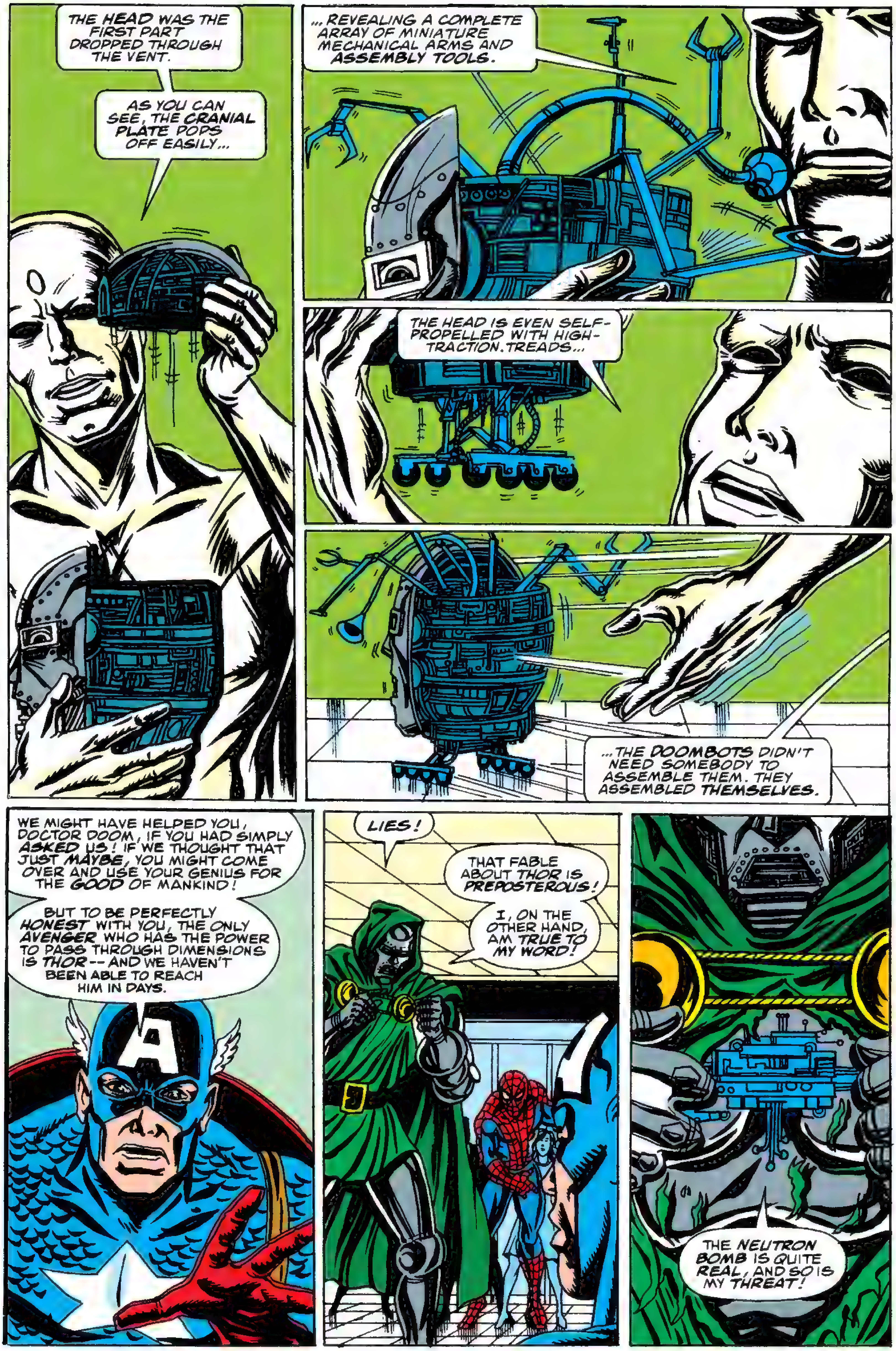

HOW CAN YOU BE SURE THAT I AM A DOOMBOT? THINK OF THE CONSEQUENCES IF I AM THE REAL DOOM AND THE NEUTRON BOMB DETONATES!
AREN'T YOU SIMPLY GUESSING?
NO! I KNOW IT FOR A FACT!
HOW CAN HE BE SO POSITIVE?
HE'S ACTUALLY GOING TO--
4
KEE-RACK!
SPINK!
SPUTTER!
POP!
I WAS RIGHT...

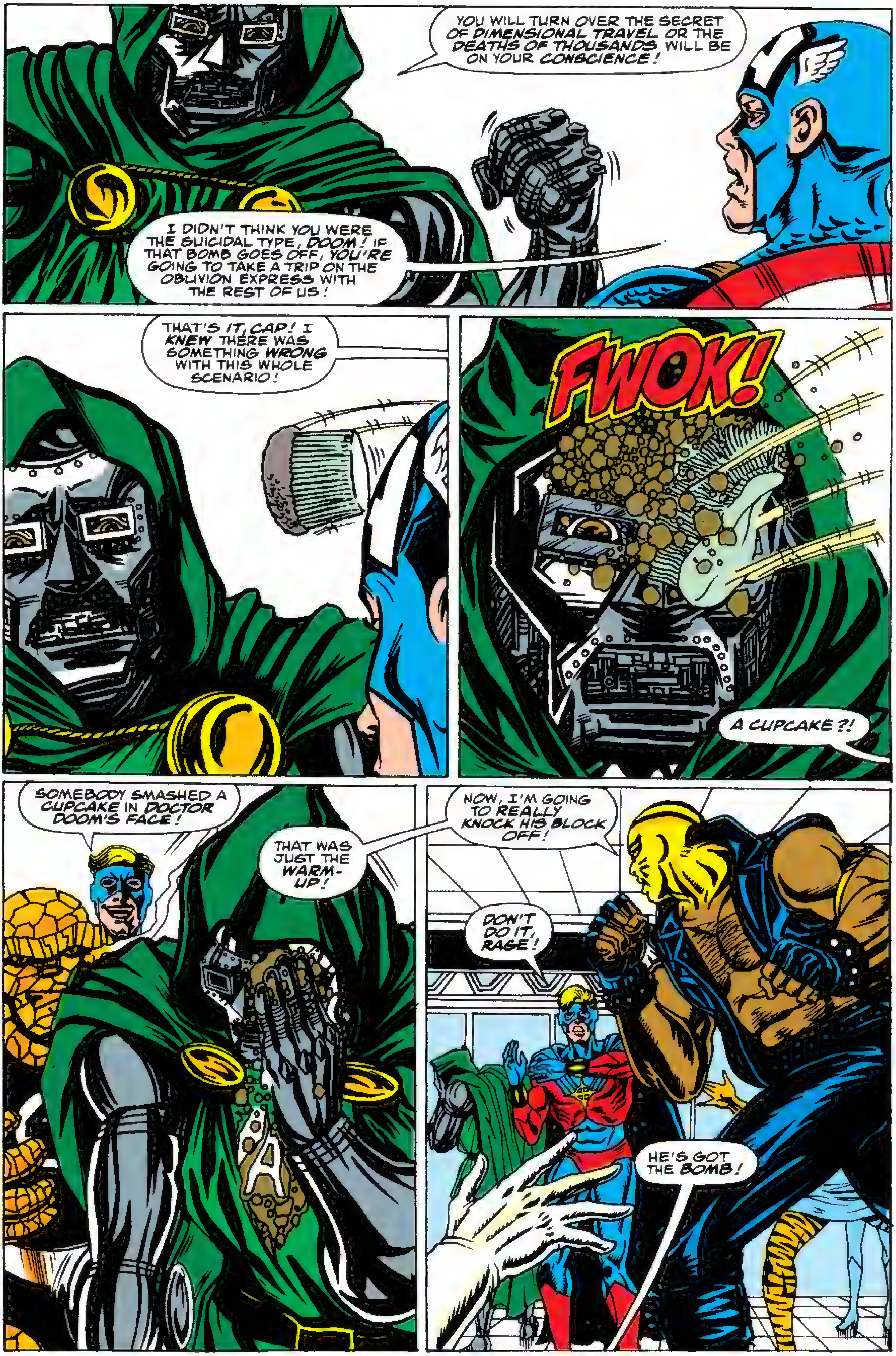
...IT WAS A DOOMBOT!
HOLD HIM ABSOLUTELY STILL, SANDMAN, WHILE I INCREASE MY MASS AGAIN...
LIGHTEN UP, VISION! JUST BECAUSE THE GUY THAT CAPTAIN AMERICA WAS FIGHTING TURNED OUT TO BE A ROBOT, DOESN'T MEAN THAT THIS GUY IS ONE, TOO!
THE ODDS ARE A STRAIGHT 50/50! THINK ABOUT THAT BEFORE YOU CUT LOOSE WITH ONE OF YOUR HIGH DENSITY HAYMAKERS!
KA-THONG!
CLUNK
IT WAS THE OTHER DOOMBOT!
THAT MEANS...

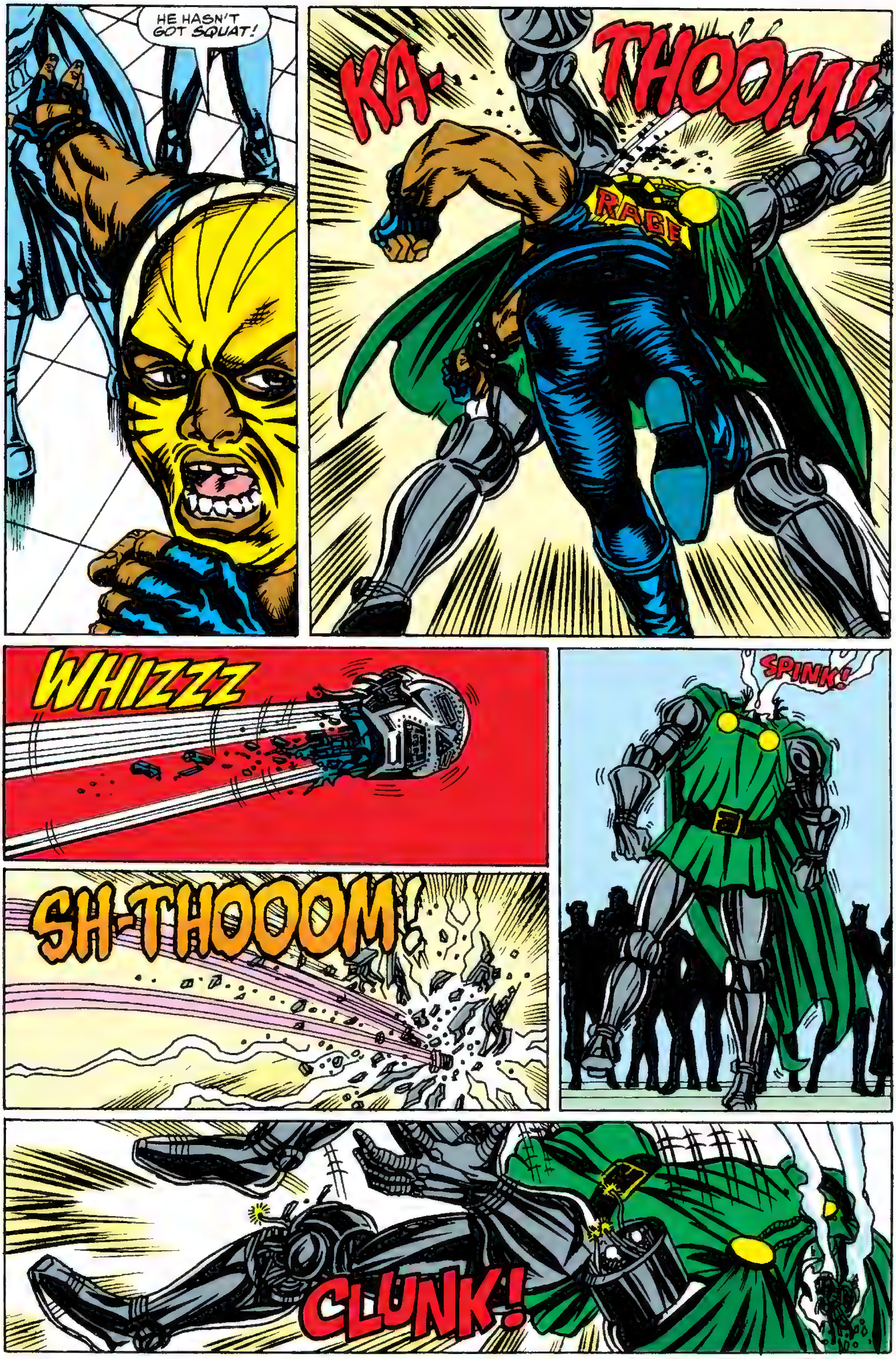

...THAT *THIS* ONE IS THE *REAL DOCTOR DOOM!*
THIS ONE HAS THE *NEUTRON BOMB* WIRED INTO HIS *ARMOR!*
I SURE HOPE NONE O' THESE *HERO* TYPES STARTS FEELIN' TOO *HEROIC*. THIS IS A TIME FER *COOL* HEADS...
THERE'S SOMETHING THAT DOESN'T RING *TRUE* ABOUT ALL THIS...
...IT'S RIGHT ON THE *EDGE* OF MY MIND, AND WHY *DOES GRANNY'S CUPCAKE* SEEM TO REMIND ME OF IT?
THESE *HOLOGRAMS* HAVE OUTLIVED THEIR USEFULNESS.
CLICK!
NOTHING IS CHANGED. THE OFFER STILL STANDS.
WHY SHOULDN'T THE *AVENGERS* COMPLY? NOTHING *CRIMINAL* WOULD TRANSPIRE AS A RESULT, AND THEY WOULD GAIN INFORMATION THAT WOULD MAKE THEIR HEADQUARTERS TRULY IMPREGNABLE--

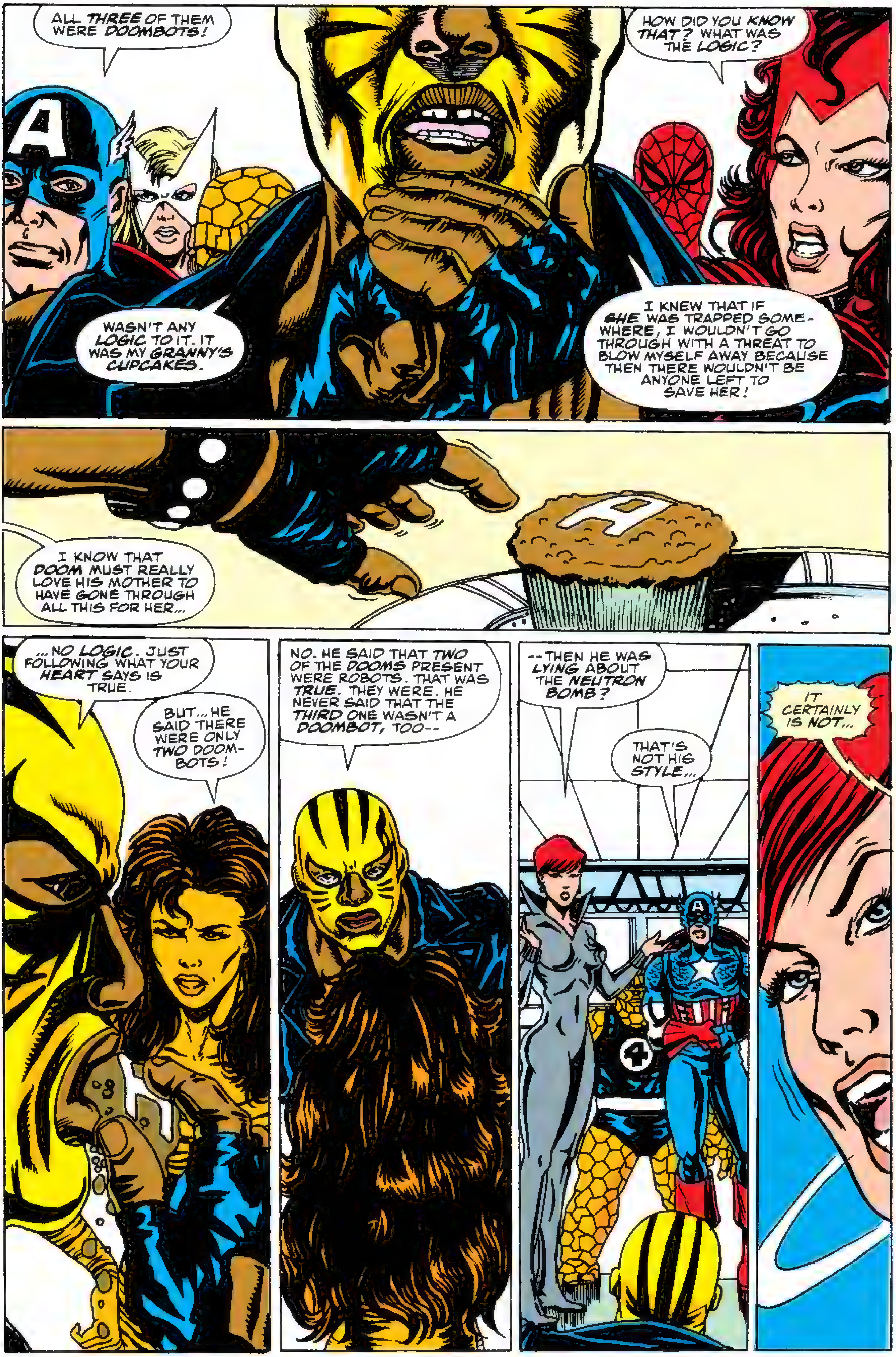

THE AVENGERS WON'T DEAL WITH YOU ON *PRINCIPAL*, DOCTOR DOOM!
WE JUST DON'T MAKE DEALS WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE *THREATENING* US.
YOU ALSO HAVE *NOTHING* LEFT TO *TRADE*. WE NOW *KNOW* HOW YOU INFILTRATED THE *DOOMBOTS* INTO THE BUILDING--
WAITAMINUTE! BEFORE *VISION* GIVES US THE *"COLUMBO"* SPEECH AND EXPLAINS IT ALL, WHY DOESN'T *CAP* TELL US HOW HE KNEW *HIS* DOOM WAS A *ROBOT*?
SIMPLE.
SPLOOT!
THERE WERE NO *BUBBLES* COMING OUT OF HIS HELMET WHILE HE WAS CHOKING ME UNDERWATER...
...EVEN IF HE HAD A SELF-CONTAINED BREATHING SYSTEM IN THE SUIT, IT WOULD STILL HAVE TO *EXHAUST* CARBON DIOXIDE!

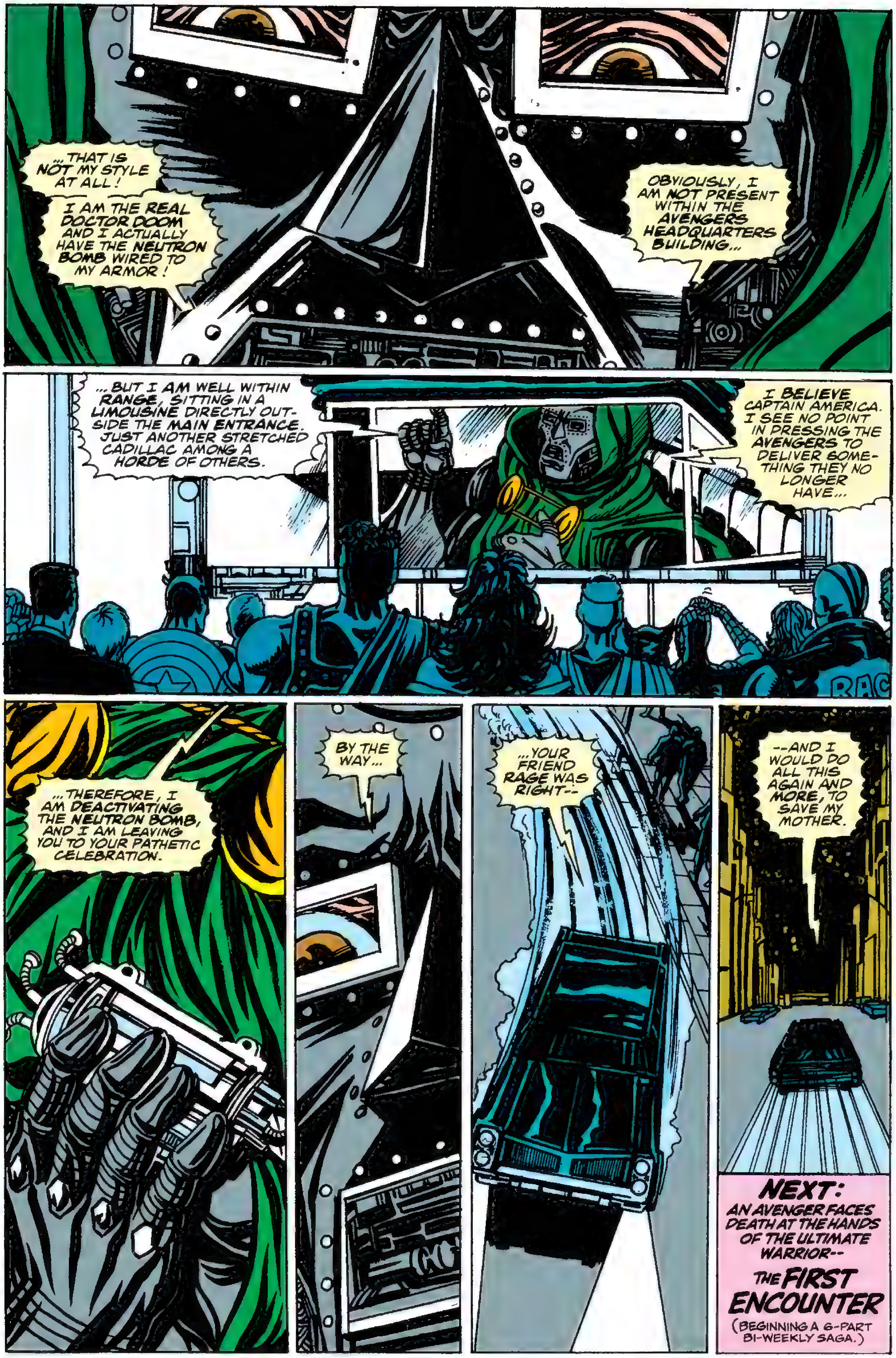

VISION? YOU HAVE THE FLOOR...
THANK YOU, CAPTAIN.
PEGGY? COULD YOU RUN UP THE SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM OF THE EAST RIVER TUNNEL AIR VENT ON THE BIG MONITOR? THE SIDE ELEVATION, PLEASE?
COMING RIGHT UP, VISION.
YOU SEE? IT LEADS DIRECTLY TO THE SURFACE AND ACTUALLY OPENS OUT UNDER A SIDEWALK GRATING ON FIFTH AVENUE.
BUT THAT PIPE ISN'T WIDE ENOUGH! IT'S BARELY TEN INCHES IN DIAMETER!
IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE ANY WIDER...
...NOT IF THE DOOMBOTS ARE MODULAR! THEY DISASSEMBLE WITH A TWIST AT THE MAJOR JOINTS!
THE TORSO DIVIDES UP INTO QUARTERS, EACH WITH ITS OWN POWER UNIT.
THE DISASSEMBLED DOOMBOTS WERE DROPPED DOWN THE VENT ONE PIECE AT A TIME...
BUT WHO REASSEMBLED THEM?


THE HEAD WAS THE FIRST PART DROPPED THROUGH THE VENT.
AS YOU CAN SEE, THE CRANIAL PLATE POPS OFF EASILY...
...REVEALING A COMPLETE ARRAY OF MINIATURE MECHANICAL ARMS AND ASSEMBLY TOOLS.
THE HEAD IS EVEN SELF-PROPELLED WITH HIGH-TRACTION TREADS...
...THE DOOMBOTS DIDN'T NEED SOMEBODY TO ASSEMBLE THEM. THEY ASSEMBLED THEMSELVES.
WE MIGHT HAVE HELPED YOU, DOCTOR DOOM, IF YOU HAD SIMPLY ASKED US! IF WE THOUGHT THAT JUST MAYBE, YOU MIGHT COME OVER AND USE YOUR GENIUS FOR THE GOOD OF MANKIND!
BUT TO BE PERFECTLY HONEST WITH YOU, THE ONLY AVENGER WHO HAS THE POWER TO PASS THROUGH DIMENSIONS IS THOR -- AND WE HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO REACH HIM IN DAYS.
LIES!
THAT FABLE ABOUT THOR IS PREPOSTEROUS!
I, ON THE OTHER HAND, AM TRUE TO MY WORD!
THE NEUTRON BOMB IS QUITE REAL, AND SO IS MY THREAT!


YOU WILL TURN OVER THE SECRET OF *DIMENSIONAL TRAVEL* OR THE *DEATHS OF THOUSANDS* WILL BE ON YOUR *CONSCIENCE!*
I DIDN'T THINK YOU WERE THE SUICIDAL TYPE, *DOOM!* IF THAT BOMB GOES OFF, *YOU'RE* GOING TO TAKE A TRIP ON THE OBLIVION EXPRESS WITH THE REST OF US!
THAT'S *IT, CAP!* I *KNEW* THERE WAS SOMETHING *WRONG* WITH THIS WHOLE SCENARIO!
FWOK!
A CUPCAKE?!
SOMEBODY SMASHED A *CUPCAKE* IN *DOCTOR DOOM'S FACE!*
THAT WAS JUST THE *WARM-UP!*
NOW, I'M GOING TO *REALLY KNOCK* HIS *BLOCK OFF!*
DON'T DO IT, RAGE!
HE'S GOT THE *BOMB!*


HE HASN'T GOT SQUAT!
KA-THOOM!
RAGE
WHIZZZ
SPINK!
SH-THOOOM!
CLUNK!


ALL THREE OF THEM WERE DOOMBOTS!
HOW DID YOU KNOW THAT? WHAT WAS THE LOGIC?
WASN'T ANY LOGIC TO IT. IT WAS MY GRANNY'S CUPCAKES.
I KNEW THAT IF SHE WAS TRAPPED SOMEWHERE, I WOULDN'T GO THROUGH WITH A THREAT TO BLOW MYSELF AWAY BECAUSE THEN THERE WOULDN'T BE ANYONE LEFT TO SAVE HER!
I KNOW THAT DOOM MUST REALLY LOVE HIS MOTHER TO HAVE GONE THROUGH ALL THIS FOR HER...
...NO LOGIC. JUST FOLLOWING WHAT YOUR HEART SAYS IS TRUE.
BUT... HE SAID THERE WERE ONLY TWO DOOMBOTS!
NO. HE SAID THAT TWO OF THE DOOMS PRESENT WERE ROBOTS. THAT WAS TRUE. THEY WERE. HE NEVER SAID THAT THE THIRD ONE WASN'T A DOOMBOT, TOO--
--THEN HE WAS LYING ABOUT THE NEUTRON BOMB?
THAT'S NOT HIS STYLE...
IT CERTAINLY IS NOT...


...THAT IS NOT MY STYLE AT ALL!
I AM THE REAL DOCTOR DOOM AND I ACTUALLY HAVE THE NEUTRON BOMB WIRED TO MY ARMOR!
OBVIOUSLY, I AM NOT PRESENT WITHIN THE AVENGERS HEADQUARTERS BUILDING...
...BUT I AM WELL WITHIN RANGE, SITTING IN A LIMOUSINE DIRECTLY OUTSIDE THE MAIN ENTRANCE. JUST ANOTHER STRETCHED CADILLAC AMONG A HORDE OF OTHERS.
I BELIEVE CAPTAIN AMERICA. I SEE NO POINT IN PRESSING THE AVENGERS TO DELIVER SOMETHING THEY NO LONGER HAVE...
RAG
...THEREFORE, I AM DEACTIVATING THE NEUTRON BOMB, AND I AM LEAVING YOU TO YOUR PATHETIC CELEBRATION.
BY THE WAY...
...YOUR FRIEND RAGE WAS RIGHT--
--AND I WOULD DO ALL THIS AGAIN AND MORE, TO SAVE MY MOTHER.
NEXT: AN AVENGER FACES DEATH AT THE HANDS OF THE ULTIMATE WARRIOR--
THE FIRST ENCOUNTER
(BEGINNING A 6-PART BI-WEEKLY SAGA.)

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OFFICIAL MARVEL ZOMBIE MAGAZINE!
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APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
01397
HI! I'M RASCALLY ROY THOMAS AND HE'S LETHAL LARRY HAMA! WE'RE THE NEW AVENGERS WRITERS!
I'LL BE HANDLING THE WEST COAST CREW WHILE LARRY CHRONICLES THE ESCAPADES OF THE EAST COAST GANG!
ENOUGH TALK! LET'S PLAY BALL!
RYAN/PALMER
ZOMBIES ASSEMBLE!
LOOK WHAT WE'RE PITCHING THIS ISH! A FABIAN NICIEZA INTERVIEW! PREVIEWS OF FAFHRD AND THE GRAY MOUSER,™ AND ZORRO!™ MUTANT REPORT LOOKS AT THE MUTANTS IN NEW WARRIORS,™ ALPHA FLIGHT,® AND CLOAK AND DAGGER!® PLUS: STAN LEE! FRED HEMBECK! MARK GRUENWALD!

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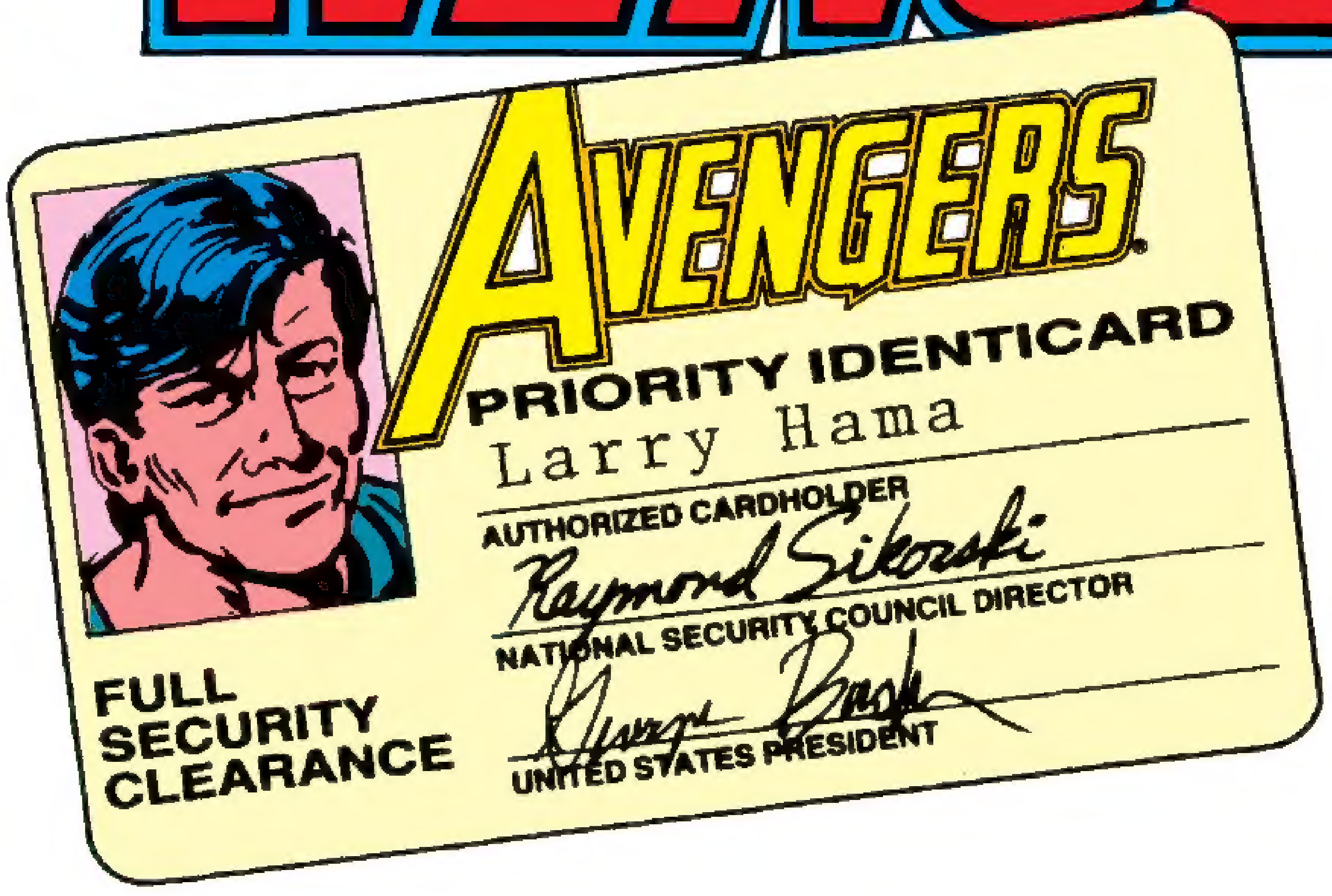
AVENGERS™



AVENGERS
PRIORITY IDENTICARD
Larry Hama
AUTHORIZED CARDHOLDER
Raymond Sikorski
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL DIRECTOR
George Bush
UNITED STATES PRESIDENT
FULL SECURITY CLEARANCE

Larry Hama

How will you know when Larry Hama takes over writing the AVENGERS? Well, his first issue will open when a black super hero shows up at an Avengers headquarters and asks Captain America, "Why they don't have any righteous African-American members on the Avengers," Larry says. Larry hopes to incorporate the character, who for the moment is called Rage either as a regular Avenger or as a reserve member of the super-group.

"Everybody brings in a black character and it has to be a nice guy," Larry said. "But this guy is a cross between Marvin Hagler and Malcolm X. He'll be really hard to like . . .but he'll be all right."

Larry says he is often approached by Marvel fans at conventions who ask him the same question. Why are there so few active Black, Asian, Hispanic, or American Indian super heroes?

The Avengers will have to look at the way they perceive Rage, and ask themselves if it is him they object to at first, or if it is that Rage violates some notions they have about what a super hero is supposed to be. "That's the interesting question to me," Larry said. "For me it's a more interesting question than can an immortal die on the 15th Astral Plane."

Not many writers in comic books begin a series asking this kind of question, but then again, Larry Hama is not known for asking the conventional questions. For the past 10 years, Larry has been writing the G.I. JOE monthly comic book, and has recently been working on WOLVERINE. In his twenty years writing comic books, Larry has rarely worked on books which take place in the Marvel Universe, with the exception of Iron Fist in the 1970's he has worked on CONAN THE BARBARIAN, and G.I. JOE, which both take place in their own worlds.

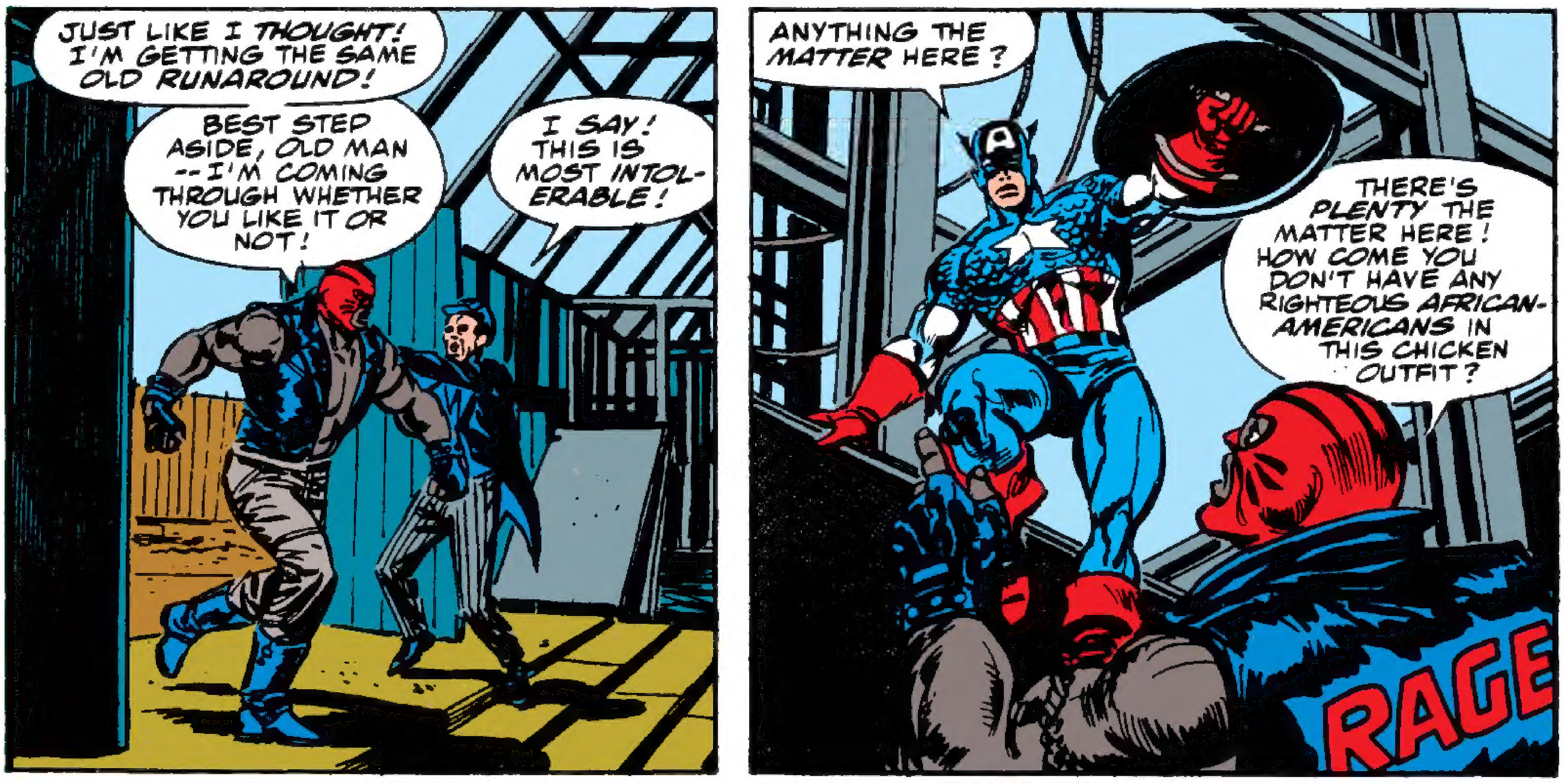
But when Larry takes over penning the Avengers' adventures, he wants to bring the team into a whole new era, where they will face new challenges.

"I don't think I want to read another story where Kang the Conqueror comes back," Larry said. "When the Thing and the Torch battled Kang in 1967 I thought it was boring. What's the point of resurrecting a character pertaining to 30, 40, 50 years ago?"

One of Larry's first decisions was to begin working on new villains to pit the Avengers against. He says that the Avengers need a new crop of villains who are powerful enough to warrant siccing the seven-member team, which includes some mighty powerful members, against them.

"We need real Avengers villains, rather than stealing other characters' villains: definitely villains who are not solely interested in doing silly things like destroying the Avengers' house," Larry said.

The United States National Security Council have helped Larry out in that regard. According to Larry, the NSC


JUST LIKE I THOUGHT! I'M GETTING THE SAME OLD RUNAROUND!
BEST STEP ASIDE, OLD MAN -- I'M COMING THROUGH WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT!
I SAY! THIS IS MOST INTOLERABLE!
ANYTHING THE MATTER HERE?
THERE'S PLENTY THE MATTER HERE! HOW COME YOU DON'T HAVE ANY RIGHTEOUS AFRICAN-AMERICANS IN THIS CHICKEN OUTFIT?
RAGE

has recently decided to turn the Avengers loose as a branch of the federal government, which they had been a part of since the 1960's.

The official story of the feds' decision was that the Avengers were cut as a part of the 1990 federal budget, and the group was not submitting paperwork on time.

But behind the scenes, the U.S. decided to cut the Avengers loose as part of the Strategic Arms Limitations II talks with the Soviet Union in 1989. Larry explains that the Soviets do not have a super group comparable to the Avengers. Sure, they have the People's Protectorate, but that team does not have a god, at least not one like Thor.

Also, the Soviets resented the group's present chairman Captain America, known for his extreme right-wing views, Larry said.

So the Avengers will move on to become a wing of the United Nations, and their charter is being amended to provide for the change.

Larry also said that with their change is international jurisdiction, the Avengers will face villains which threaten the world. He said he is also paving the way a for Soviet super hero to join the team in the near future.

While Larry is letting some elements of the "real world" slip into the Marvel Universe, he says comic books have always been inspired in some ways by current events.

"Where all this springs from depends on its time. You've got the Red Skull and Captain America (from the World War II era 1940's), then the red menace (with groups like SHIELD), then you had these nuclear fears, where people were bitten by radioactive spiders (the ol' web-head, Spider-Man), or exposed to radioactivity (the Hulk, the Fantastic Four)," Larry said.

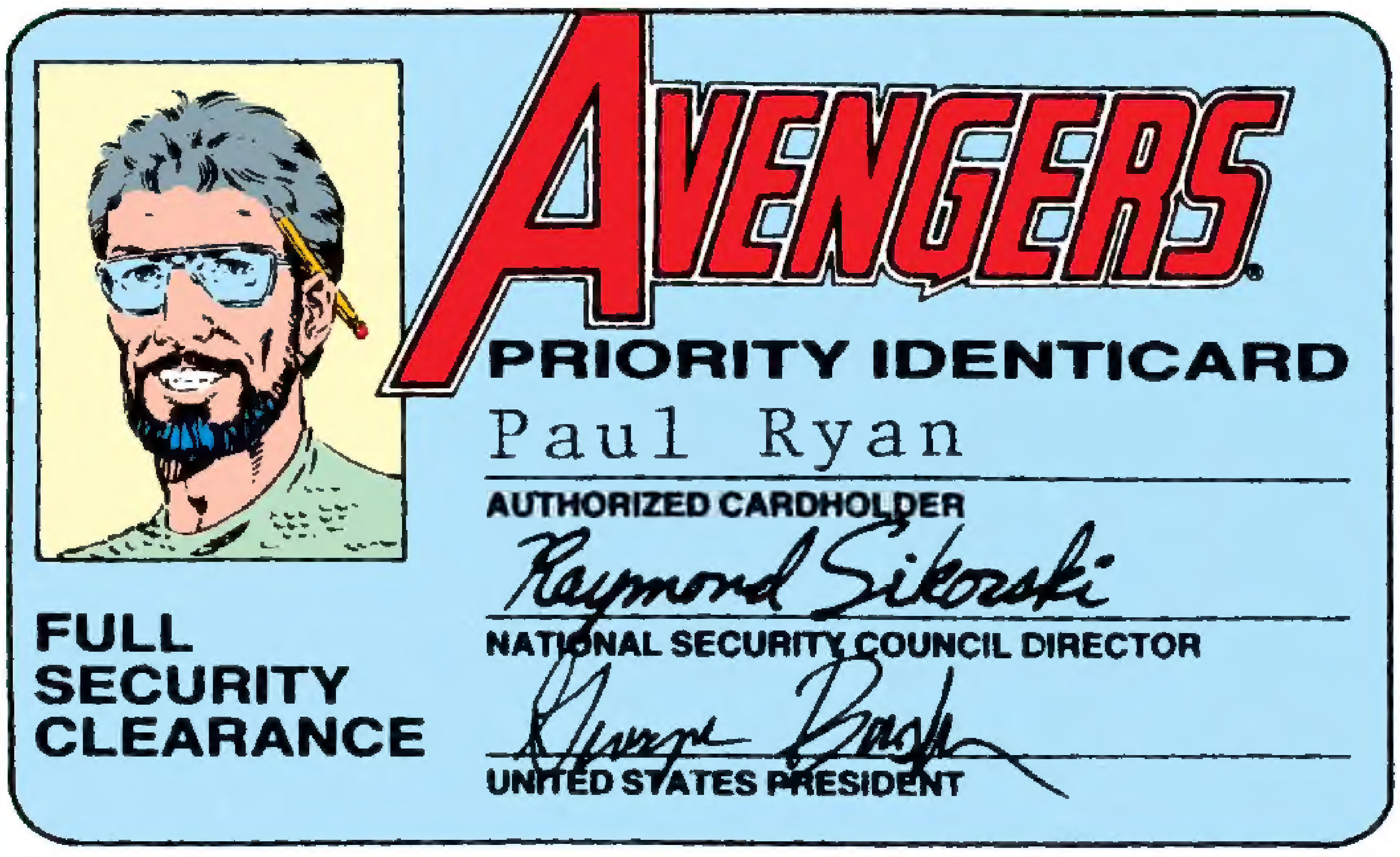
"Gone are the days when some kid could walk into a cave and be given a secret word by an alien to turn him into a super hero (as we hear characters from another company have been created)," he continued.

"People's rationale for super heroes has to change," Larry explained. While Larry is planning some changes in the Avengers' charter to bring it more up-to-date, he said he plans to work more on the context the group lives in.

"The Avengers do this, not because they just like to bash super-beings, but because they have a higher calling," Larry said. He says their reason for existing as a group is an ethical and moral one. He plans to raise a lot of questions about why the Avengers have stayed together as a group for so long, and do it in action-packed stories every month.

—John A. Salerno

PROFILE: PAUL RYAN



AVENGERS

PRIORITY IDENTICARD

Paul Ryan

AUTHORIZED CARDHOLDER

Raymond Sikorski

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL DIRECTOR

George Bush

UNITED STATES PRESIDENT

FULL SECURITY CLEARANCE

Marvel freelance credits (past): THING, IRON MAN, SQUADRON SUPREME Limited Series, ETERNALS Limited Series, DP7, NIGHTMASK, KICKERS, THOR Graphic Novel, G.I. JOE, SQUADRON Graphic Novel.

Marvel freelance credits (present): AVENGERS, AVENGERS WEST COAST, MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS (Wolverine)

My place of birth is: Somerville, Massachusetts

People who knew me in high school thought I was: A little strange (no, not a midget Sorcerer Supreme, just a tad odd!)

My hobbies are: Let's get real! I'm doing two team books a month. Who has time for hobbies!? Past hobbies were: horseback riding, Karate, weight training, fencing and archery!

My pet peeves are: Kept in a little cage in the basement and only allowed out on Halloween.

My favorite performers are: Sarah Brightman, Jane Olivier, Mel Gibson, Michelle Pfieffer.

The last good book I read was: *The Hunt for Red October*

The last good movie I saw was: *Back to the Future III*

If they were making a movie of my life, I'd like to see my part played by: Tom Hanks

My oddest habit is: Drawing comics for a living.

My greatest accomplishment outside the comics field is: Getting into the comics field (Never say die!)

The reason I got into comics was: A burning passion to tell epic stories, through illustrations, that began at the tender age of four. Unfortunately I chose the wrong surfaces around the house upon which to express my creativity and got smacked for it. Thank goodness I discovered paper in time to insure my continued existence.

The biggest influences on my work include: Hal Foster, Curt Swan, Gil Kane, John Buscema, Neal Adams, John Byrne, and Bob Layton.

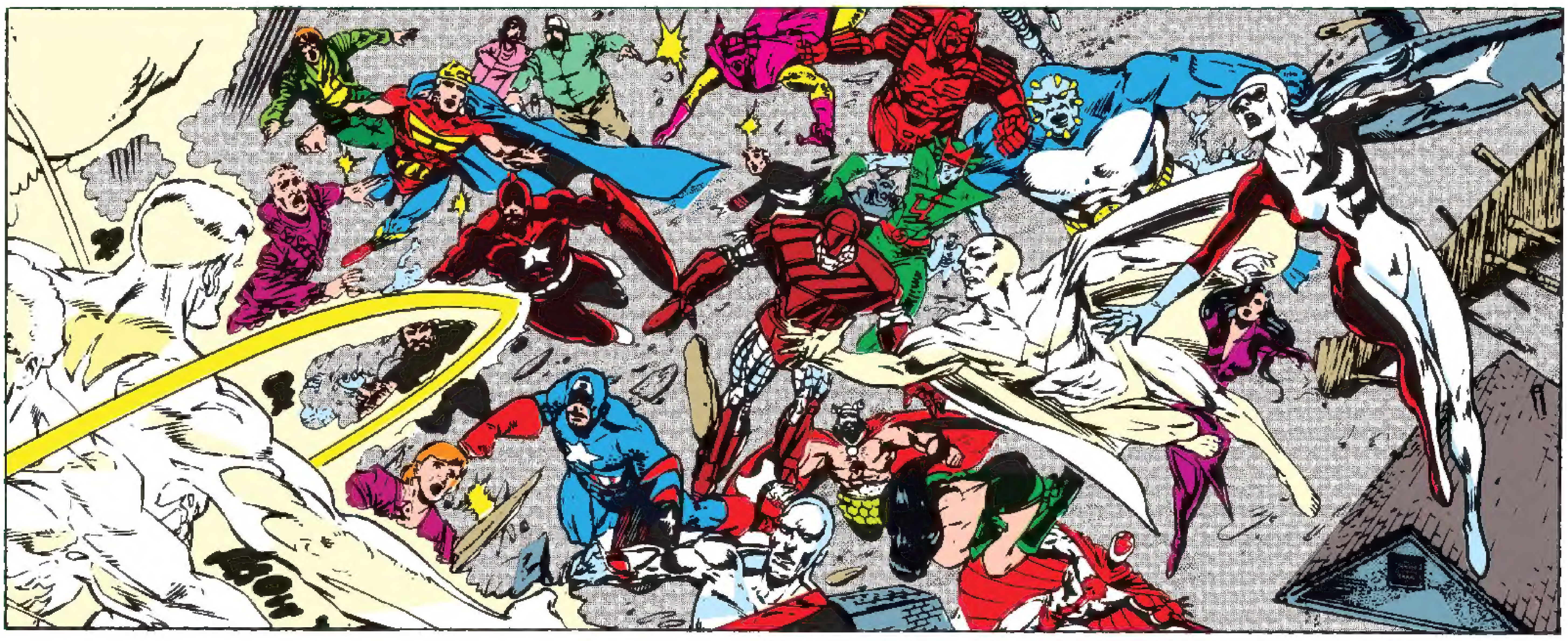
The single work of which I am most proud is: The SQUADRON SUPREME Graphic Novel.

My greatest unfulfilled ambition in the comics field is: To write and illustrate an Epic science-fiction series based on characters I created for a Charlton Tryout book back in 1983.

The worst part of my job is: Having to make up for time lost by writers who turn plots in late.

When nobody's looking I like to: Have shadow duels with my swords.

The one thing I really want the world to know about me is: Where to send my fan mail (what's that, Howard? I don't have any fans!?). Oh, never mind! Deep depression, heavy on the humility!



▲ **A gathering of heroes: The Avengers, Alpha Flight, The Peoples Protectorate and members from the under sea Kingdom of Atlantis confront the nuclear menace of COMBINE.**

THE PEACE CORPSE — MAKING THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE!?!

The world narrowly avoids a nuclear holocaust!

Nuclear holocaust — the ultimate horror that almost became reality in 1990.

The world was brought to the *brink* of a nuclear holocaust this past year by a Soviet terrorist group known as THE PEACE CORPSE. They hijacked a British submarine—the WATERWIND and planned on detonating it in New York in the hopes of starting World War III.

The CORPSE motto is: "The only way to save mankind is by destroying it!" But lucky for us, the world's mightiest heroes banded together to *stop* the PEACE CORPSE.

After several high level meetings between the United States government, the British government, and the United Nations, it was decided that the best course of action would be to utilize America's mightiest heroes, THE AVENGERS, in fighting this newest menace. The Avengers' task: to stop the PEACE CORPSE at all costs.

Meanwhile, the Soviet Union dispatched its PEOPLE'S PROTECTORATE to capture the terrorists, since they were Soviet citizens. Unfortunately, this caused a mistaken confrontation between the AVENGERS and the PEOPLE'S PROTECTORATE concerning who had jurisdiction over taking the terrorists into custody. The battle drifted unknowingly into the territorial boundaries of the undersea kingdom of ATLANTIS, and the Atlanteans were less than pleased with the intrusion.

After a three way battle in which the meager forces of Atlantis were scattered, the AVENGERS and the PEOPLE'S PROTECTORATE called a truce and teamed up to defeat the PEACE CORPSE.

The two groups tracked the WATERWIND to Conception Bay, St. John's, Newfoundland. There, ALPHA FLIGHT, acting with the authority of the Canadian government, took control of the situation. They coordinated strategies with both the AVENGERS and the PEOPLE'S PROTECTORATE. They fought long and hard, but not even the combined strengths of the three super groups plus the ATLANTEANS (who followed the AVENGERS and the PEOPLE'S PROTECTORATE up to Canada looking to continue their battle, but thankfully, saw the gravity of the situation and pledged their support for the remainder of the conflict) could stop the terrorists from detonating the WATERWIND's nuclear warheads. If not for the quick witted *Shaman*, ALPHA FLIGHT's resident mystic, the people and land of Newfoundland would have been turned into nuclear soot! Eyewitnesses claim that Shaman inverted his mystical pouch and sucked the entire area and all its occupants into it.

The two leaders of the PEACE CORPSE, *Prokvitch* and *Strokov*, had linked themselves biologically to the warheads' detonator, and in the ensuing explosion were transformed into a being known as the *COMBINE*— an amalgam of both men. It was a truly terrifying sight to behold. The Combine hovered in the air like an evil talisman. It glowed bright silver and both men had been fused together back to back.

During that time, the Combine, which still had the consciousness of Strokov and Prokvitch, was convinced by the heroes that the world's destruction would not lead to a new beginning. Their current whereabouts are unknown.

— *Eric Fein*

MARVEL: 1990 – THE YEAR IN REVIEW ARTICLE BY ERIC FEIN

INTERNATIONAL ACTION!

To prevent a nuclear nightmare, the Avengers must take on the Russian People's Protectorate, Canada's Alpha Flight and the undersea might of Atlantis! But back home, what is happening to Jarvis and the Avengers' support staff? Then, Avengers East and West Coast team up when the towering Terminus strikes! And a new hero called Rage makes a major impression on the team…but will they see eye to eye in time to defeat the bizarre Tetrarchs of Entropy? Then, as the Avengers sign a new charter with the United Nations and the old order changeth once again, who will join Earth's Mightiest? Rage? Spider-Man? Or…the Sandman?! And what happens when Doctor Doom targets Avengers Mansion?

AVENGERS #319-333 & ANNUAL #19 AND MATERIAL FROM CAPTAIN AMERICA ANNUAL #9, IRON MAN ANNUAL #11, THOR ANNUAL #15 & AVENGERS WEST COAST ANNUAL #5

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